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CITY OF STORMREACH™



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"He threw the first barrel," Shadow said. "You can't blame Spike for defending me."



"That may be so," Petra replied. "But your dead friend's comrades might not be so forgiving."

INTRODUCTION

In the arena known as the Red Ring, a Valenar warrior leaps out of the way of a giant's club. The elf came to Stormreach in search of his history—now he is forced to reenact it in this deadly contest.

In Falconer's Spire, a Lyrandar lord studies maps and reports. He reaches out with his thoughts, feeling the paths of the storm and considering if he wants to hold back the tempest or welcome it in.

In the slum of Dannel's Pride, a young man studies the scroll he's been given, marveling at the destructive power bound within its words. For an instant he feels doubt. Then he hears the cries of a starving child and the curses of a crippled soldier, and he knows what he must do.

In a harbor alley, a merchant spits blood and teeth onto the ground. As the half-giant ruffian draws back for another blow, the wounded man sees a guard standing in the mouth of the alley, and for an instant hope surges through him. But the guard just laughs, and the merchant realizes . . . the guard is waiting for his cut.

Stormreach is humanity's greatest outpost on the continent of Xen'drik. Established by pirates and smugglers, it has become a vital resource for those who wish to explore or exploit the shattered land. Although the culture of Stormreach has its roots in Khorvaire, it is a free city with no allegiance to any of the Five Nations. As such, Stormreach is a haven for explorers and exiles, for adventurers and criminals, for soldiers disillusioned with their former kingdoms and those who wish to continue the war. It is a beacon for dissidents and romantics, for fugitives on the run and those who need to escape their own memories. Far smaller than Sharn, it is a city where a few bold adventurers can make a difference—a place where the major players quickly come to know each other.

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Stormreach is far more than a gateway to Xen'drik. The history of the city stretches back across the Age of Giants to the dawn of Eberron. Modern Stormreach is built on the ruins of past civilizations, from giant to thri-kreen and even stranger things. Some remnants of these civilizations can be seen on the surface. Others lie hidden underground, from the sewers of the giants to entire sections of ancient cities preserved from the ravages of time.

USING THIS BOOK

Poised on the edge of civilization, Stormreach is a hotbed of intrigue and adventure. It is home to criminals seeking sanctuary from the laws of the Five Nations, scholars working to unearth the secrets of the past, dragonmarked barons striving to exploit the untapped resources of Xen'drik, and many others. This book provides a Dungeon Master with information required to run adventures in the city and is the definitive source about the place.

This introduction briefly outlines the history of Stormreach and the city's role in Eberron.

Chapter One: Life in Stormreach describes daily life in the city, from its sparse laws to festivals and entertainment. A district-by-district overview details businesses and inhabitants here and provides adventure hooks for DMs.

Chapter Two: Power and Politics presents the powers at play in the city, from its rulers, the Storm Lords, to the dragonmarked houses. Stormreach's gangs, militias, and other organizations are also described.

Chapter Three: Members Only explores various groups in the city that player characters might encounter or join: the Bilge Rats, the Guardians of Rushemé, the Iron Watch, and others.

Chapter Four: Beyond the City examines the interaction between Stormreach and Xen'drik. Expert guides, legendary monsters, and drow and giant plots can all be found in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Urban Adventures outlines adventure opportunities in the city, in the ancient undercity, below the harbor's murky water, on the bloody floor of the Red Ring, and elsewhere.

You need the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG), *Monster Manual* (MM), and *EBERRON Campaign Setting* (ECS) to use the material in this book. The book makes frequent reference to *Secrets of Xen'drik* (SX) and occasionally draws upon material from the following supplements: *Complete Arcane* (CAr), *Complete Mage* (CM), *Complete Psionic* (CP), *Complete Warrior* (CW), *Dragonmarked* (Dra), *Dungeonscape* (Dun), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (EPH), *Five Nations* (FN), *Heroes of Battle* (HB), *Heroes of Horror* (HH), *Magic of Eberron* (ME), *Miniatures Handbook* (MH), *Monster Manual III* (MM3), *Player's Handbook II* (PH2), *Races of Eberron* (RE), *Spell Compendium* (SC), *Tome of Battle* (ToB), and *Unearthed Arcana* (UA). These supplements can enhance your enjoyment of *Stormreach*, but most of the details you need are provided in this book.

HISTORY OF STORMREACH

Stormreach is relatively small—its population could live in a single ward within Sharn—but it is a free city; for all intents and purposes, it is an independent nation with its own customs and traditions. The Code of Galifar does not apply here, and the rulers of Stormreach consider themselves the equals of any king in Khorvaire. To understand the culture of Stormreach, one must look to its history.

Stormreach is haunted by its past. Born in the modern age, the city is a human creation, but the region's history stretches back long before the rise of human civilization. The giants of Rushemé say that the region is cursed and point to the ruins of a half-dozen civilizations as proof. Scholars from the Library of Korranberg and Morgrave University have studied these ruins for decades and have created a simple map of the region. But many of the greatest secrets remain. Uncovering the truth is a challenge for adventurers—and a task that has already claimed the lives of hundreds.

THE AGE OF DEMONS

Much about this age eludes modern scholars. The dominion of the demon overlords stretched across the face of Eberron. There's no question that rakshasa rajahs ruled domains in Xen'drik and that the dragons and couatls opposed them and might have drawn the titans, the giants' mythic ancestors, into the struggle. But where were those battles fought? What remains of that epic conflict? Explorers have occasionally found

traces of the past: the magic blade of a rakshasa warrior or a brass spire in the style of Ashtakala, citadel of the Lords of Dust. According to the storytellers of Rushemé, it was in this age that a curse was placed upon the land near the northern ocean. Some scholars believe that a terrible secret is hidden deep beneath Stormreach, below the most ancient ruins of the giants.

THE AGE OF GIANTS

Although some believe this land to be cursed, others have always been drawn to it. The titan Cul'sir made this region the center of his empire. Many sages believe that the Emperor, the statue towering over the harbor, is a representation of Cul'sir himself, set to guard the city against the demons of the past.

Researchers are still struggling to reconstruct the events leading up to the devastation of the primal giant cultures. It's clear that elves lived among the Cul'sir giants, most likely as slaves; many tools and structures from this period are designed for use by the smaller elves. What records have been recovered emphasize that the city played a critical role during the quori incursion and was a focal point for mystical research. The historical records are obscure about what the city's wizards were researching but hint at a tremendous power source beneath the city. Whether it was a creation of the giants or a force they were trying to tap into is unknown.

The defeat of the quori set the stage for the elf rebellion. Relics found in the jungles around Stormreach suggest a campaign of guerilla warfare lasting for centuries. This quiet struggle was punctuated by pitched battles. According to Tairnadal tales, the great hero Dyrael Morain led an attack on Stormreach in an effort to "destroy the greatest evil in this dark land." Dyrael and his forces, the largest elf army ever seen, were annihilated, but the Tairnadal still honor his bravery and sacrifice. Many Valenar have searched for Dyrael's bones and his legendary blade in the fields south of Stormreach.

The Age of Giants came to an end in a wave of epic magic and dragonfire. Compared to much of Xen'drik, the ruins of Stormreach are well preserved; the colossal watchman is almost untouched. Other sections of the city were partially buried but otherwise left intact. The giant inhabitants were slaughtered, but some sages

STORMREACH AT A GLANCE

Population: 11,650.

Demographics: Humans 43%, gnomes 9%, half-elves 9%, dwarves 8%, orcs and half-orcs 8%, halflings 7%, elves 6%, warforged 2%, shifters 2%, changelings 1%, other (drow, goblinoids, giants, kalashtar, monstrous races) 5%.

Rulers: The Storm Lords.

Founders: Yorrick Amanatu, Molou Lassite, Delera Omaren, Kolis Sel Shadra, Jolan Wylkes.

Motto: "Rising on the edge of the world."

believe the dragons held back in dealing with Stormreach itself—that for some reason they were afraid to unleash their full power against the city.

This period can be the source of many adventures. The Cul'sir giants were master wizards and artificers, capable of producing artifacts and eldritch machines. Many wonders are hidden beneath the city, along with terrible tools that must be kept out of villains' hands. Valenar warriors can search for ancestral relics, while kalashtar hunt for the defenses crafted during the quori incursion.

THE SHIFTING CITY

The devastation of Xen'drik left a continent in chaos. The archaeological record suggests that a number of cultures found footholds in the region around Stormreach. But each of these settlements collapsed, and by the time humans came to the area, all that was left were ghosts and shattered stone. Scholars have confirmed that the following groups inhabited Stormreach in the past thirty thousand years.

The first group to return to Stormreach was the giants, the ancestors of the modern giants of Rushemé (see *Guardians of Rushemé*, page 111). The loremasters of Rushemé say that their ancestors were gripped by the Du'rashka Tul, a homicidal madness that forced them to turn on one another and destroyed their nation.

Thousands of years later, the sahuagin of the Thunder Sea came to Stormreach. The sea devils constructed an amphibious community in the flooded sewers of the original city. Modern sahuagin will not speak of this fallen culture. Some scholars believe this silence is due to shame—that the old sahuagin were corrupted by a dark force below the city. Others assert that the sahuagin civilization was destroyed so long ago that the modern sahuagin simply know nothing about it.

The sahuagin were ultimately driven from the city by a group of giants called the Fallen Stone. Evidence suggests they were either storm giants or some sort of amphibious stone giant—a missing link between the two species. The Fallen Stone was short-lived; following their victory over the sahuagin, they apparently fell prey to a plague that resisted all forms of magical treatment. Within a century, the region was abandoned again.

The next society that left a clear mark on the region was the thri-kreen. In the modern age, the mantisfolk are few in number and largely avoid human contact. But there was a time when tens of thousands of thri-kreen inhabited the region, carving twisting tunnels into the giants' foundations and sculpting strange monuments beneath the city. The fate of the thri-kreen remains one of the region's greatest mysteries. The other cultures fell to battle or plague. As far as researchers have been able to tell, the thri-kreen culture came to an end instantaneously, as if the bulk of the thri-kreen population simply vanished. The thri-kreen refuse to discuss their history with humans, but the answer might be found in Stormreach's depths.

These four cultures left clear marks on Stormreach, while others passed through with barely a trace. The Library of Korranberg has records of a gnome effort to build an outpost in Stormreach sixteen hundred years ago. After mere months, a handful of survivors returned to Zilargo. They blamed their failure on hostile giants, but in recent years the scholar Hegan Del Dorian has advanced the theory that this was a cover story hiding what really happened; he points to the written testimony of a sailor who speaks of a "darkness that gripped both body and soul."

THE AGE OF PIRACY

The first Khorvairian humans to make landfall were pirates. They wanted an outpost to repair and resupply their ships, and the crumbling docks of Stormreach seemed a good foundation for such a hideout. They found a city in ruins, marked by the civilizations that had come before. The pirates clashed with giants, drow, and sahuagin, but they were mysteriously spared the horrors that befell previous settlers. A century passed without plague or warfare, and the pirates prospered. They began searching for opportunities on the continent and discovered both relics in the interior and the power of kuryeva (SX 23).

Over the years, piracy became an increasing problem in the Thunder Sea. Both this and opportunities in Xen'drik caught the attention of the dragonmarked houses. House Tharashk saw the shiploads of dragonshards the pirates were capturing from the Riedrans and wanted to establish their own prospecting operations in the shattered land. Scholars and artificers seized the relics retrieved from the interior and wanted more. But between harsh weather, the sahuagin, and the constant threat of piracy, travel was simply too dangerous. In 800 YK, representatives of the Twelve appealed to Galifar to bring an end to the pirates' depredations and establish a port in Xen'drik. As Galifar turned its power toward the south, five of the pirate lords, now called Storm Lords, chose to work with the kingdom in exchange for amnesty and authority within the new city. Though it pained the king to work with pirates, the Storm Lords had invaluable knowledge and influence, and defeating the pirates would have been a costly campaign. The king agreed to the offer, and the Stormreach Compact paved the way for Stormreach as it is today.

THE CITY IS BORN

By the terms of the Stormreach Compact, Galifar recognized the pirate lords' right to hold their current lands. As a result, the dragonmarked houses had to work with the Storm Lords to establish a foothold in Xen'drik. Over time, these forces worked together to transform the pirate haven into the city of today. By and large, the city has been stable, with two notable exceptions.

The Omaren Revolt: In 890 YK, the Storm Lord Castal Omaren attempted to eliminate the other Storm Lords and seize control of the city. The coup failed. The Omaren family was allowed to retain its lordship but



The Fire Storm was a terrifying time for the people of Stormreach

was forced to make reparations and to operate under strict penalties, which remain in effect to this day.

The Fire Storm: In 946 YK, the city came under attack by the Battalion of the Basalt Towers, an alliance of fire giants. In addition to physical force, the giants employed an artifact that called down meteor swarms upon the city; some of the craters from this conflict can still be seen today. In a curious turn of events, the giants of Rushemé joined with the Stormreach Guard and the dragonmarked houses to turn back this assault, not out of a desire to protect the city's inhabitants but to keep the city out of the battalion's hands. The power of the Basalt Towers was broken, but some of the giants survived and recent reports from the interior suggest that they have rebuilt their forces.

Today Stormreach is more prosperous than ever. The dragonmarked houses are increasing their operations, and tariffs on trade bring gold into the Storm Lords' coffers. Scholars and adventurers are coming to Xen'drik in ever-increasing numbers, and new settlers are working to establish communities beyond Stormreach. The Last War brought new violence and trouble to the city, but Stormreach continues to grow with each passing year.

STORMREACH AND THE LAST WAR

The population of Stormreach has always included immigrants from the Five Nations, many of whom retain fond memories of their distant homelands. The

FIVE THINGS EVERY STORMREACHER KNOWS ABOUT

The Storm Lords: Stormreach is a small city, and the Storm Lords are prominent public figures. The streets buzz anytime new gossip emerges about Lord Jonas Wylkes or whenever the Lassites throw a party at Molou's Distillery. Lady Kirris Sel Shadra maintains a low profile, but people are always speculating about the power she wields in the shadows. People might love them or hate them, yet the Storm Lords are a common topic of conversation whenever people gather.

Tall Tales of Xen'drik: Every Stormreacher can spin tales of horrific monsters, lost expeditions, and fabled treasures found in the depths of Xen'drik. Some stories are passed down over the generations. Others are embellishments of personal experiences in the dungeons below the city or on trips to the continent's interior. When people gather in Stormreach taverns, they typically tell tall tales, with each storyteller trying to top the one before.

Languages: Stormreach is extremely cosmopolitan for its size. The inhabitants not only deal with a steady influx of travelers and merchants from Khorvaire but

also with drow, elves from Aerenal, giants, and sahuagin. Most Stormreachers learn at least one additional language. Beyond this, a number of words and phrases from other languages have fallen into the basic vocabulary. A Stormreacher might not speak Sahuagin, but he can certainly swear in it.

No Justice: The Stormreach Guard serves the Storm Lords and their interests. The guards are a force to be avoided, not a source of security. They arrest and sometimes execute criminals, but only if this benefits the Storm Lords; no moral principle is at work.

Gangs and Militias: Groups described as gangs are typically criminals driven by selfish desires. Whether they are muggers, pickpockets, burglars, dreamlily dealers, or worse, they prey on the city's people. Militias are armed groups based on political or religious ideology. Often they are supported by the inhabitants of their wards, who perceive them as a source of stability and vigilante justice. Whether they support or despise them, Stormreachers are familiar with the gangs and militias in their home wards.

city has never been subject to the Five Nations, but the Storm Lords gave their fealty to Galifar, by virtue of its strength, and feared a day would come when the kingdom across the ocean would send its fleets to bring their city under its rule. When word reached Stormreach that King Jarot was dead and Galifar had collapsed in civil war, the Lassite Storm Lord at the time gave a shot of kuryeva to anyone who would drink a toast to the kingdom's fall.

Stormreach remained neutral throughout the Last War and became a haven for dissidents and defectors. The city is an imperfect sanctuary due to the relative lawlessness of the streets, but those who have sufficient funds can turn to House Deneith or House Kundarak for security. Less affluent defectors can always find sanctuary by joining the Stormreach Guard. Whatever their flaws in protecting the common people, the guards look after their own, and the Stormreach Recruiters ask no questions; when a man picks up a guard's sword, he leaves his past behind.

Despite Stormreach's neutrality, echoes of the Last War resonate through the city, where militias and gangs have arisen based on national themes. An adventurer who thinks the war is over might change his mind after clashing with Dannel's Wrath or the Ninth Wands of Aundair (as long as the Storm Lords are not threatened, the Stormreach Guard ignores sectarian violence between immigrants). The Last War continues in Stormreach in ways unseen in Khorvaire, ways that surprise visitors who were involved in the war. A former soldier could be pressured to help a militia that has ties to his nation. Cyran refugees could hold a player character responsible for crimes she committed while serving in the war. An old companion could show up with a scheme to recover a treasure cache lost in the war—but the soldier has been exiled, and he needs his old war buddies to help. Vengeance, bigotry, and hope are all aspects of Stormreach. Even in this land of new opportunities, adventurers should come face to face with the consequences of the war.

NATIVES OF XEN'DRIK

Xen'drik is a land of monsters. A staggering array of strange creatures can be found in its wilds, from the beelike abeil to the cunning yuan-ti. A few monstrous races have a strong presence in or around Stormreach, so travelers are likely to encounter these creatures at some point in their journeys.

Giants were once the dominant species of Xen'drik, and modern Stormreach is built amid the ruins of a giant citadel. Many races of giants can be found across Xen'drik; those most frequently encountered in Stormreach are the nomadic hill giants of the Tents of Rushemé. From their encampment southwest of the city, these giants trade with the city's inhabitants. Stone giants and jungle giants occasionally pass through Rushemé; other types of giants are rarely seen and are often hostile when they are.

Drow are spread across the northern coast of Xen'drik. Most of them shun Stormreach and its inhabitants. However, a few drow exiles have found their way to the city, and others have chosen to abandon their old ways and settle among humanity.

Sahuagin have a strong presence in the Thunder Sea, and most captains make deals with them to ensure safe passage. The sea devils are often seen in the city's Harbor district, where a shrine to the Devourer rises from the water. Sahuagin respect the peace when they are in Stormreach, but wise travelers avoid antagonizing them.

Thri-kreen are few in number, but a handful make their homes in the tunnels beneath Stormreach and occasionally make their way to the surface. It is difficult but worthwhile to negotiate with the thri-kreen, for they are among the best guides to the city's dungeons.

Kobolds are relative newcomers to the region. Sometime in the last century, a few tribes of them crawled up from Khyber into the city's lower regions. Largely savage, these creatures are seen as pests by people on the surface, and the Stormreach Guard offers a bounty of 2 copper pieces for kobold hides.

MANTISFOLK OF THE SHATTERED LAND

A thriving thri-kreen civilization once inhabited the area that became Stormreach, yet much about the mantisfolk remains a mystery to this day.

Determined to learn all he could about them, the gnome researcher Lohn Ender, from the Library of Korranberg, traveled to Xen'drik and somehow managed to garner the favor of the thri-kreen, who allowed him to study them from a respectful distance. This research culminated in the publication of his findings, which immediately caused a stir within the academic community. In his report, known as the Ender

Disquisition, Ender presented the curious theory that the thri-kreen of Xen'drik exist simultaneously in Eberron and in Dal Quor, the Region of Dreams. The disquisition claims that this dual existence is the source of the thri-kreen's baffling immunity to the Traveler's Curse (SX 25), as well as their seemingly alien mindset and idiosyncratic relations with other humanoid races.

For more information on the thri-kreen, see *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.



WO

Stormreach provides an opportunity to interact with creatures that are rarely seen in Khorvaire

STORIES IN STORMREACH

Stormreach is unlike any city in Khorvaire. Sharn's vast size provides a host of opportunities, but Stormreach's unique location and history make possible adventures that could never occur elsewhere in Eberron. Whether you're playing an explorer traveling to Stormreach or you're a Dungeon Master plotting a story arc, consider the following paths a story could take.

The Gate to Xen'drik: Stormreach is the largest human city in Xen'drik. Even if an expedition does not go directly through the city, explorers will probably use the city as a stopping point to replenish supplies or hire guides. Even adventurers who prefer pulp action over global intrigue have much to gain from making friends in Stormreach. Suppliers and smiths can provide travelers with vital goods or a market for treasures found in the continent's interior. Sages and stranger folk, such as Katanavash (page 62), can provide rewards to adventurers willing to reveal their discoveries. If PCs have the urge to adventure but have no goal in mind, Stormreach always has patrons looking for capable swords to risk venturing into the shattered land.

The Tip of the Iceberg: With ancient dungeons below every street in Stormreach, characters in search of adventure and treasure never need to leave the city. Stormreach's history includes occupation by sahuagin, the psionic thri-kreen, and giants whose knowledge of magic outstripped that of the modern age. The world beneath the city is filled with traps, treasures, monsters, and more. If the PCs desire a dungeon crawl, Stormreach can offer it.

Echoes of the Last War: The Treaty of Thronehold keeps tensions in check in Khorvaire, but anything goes in Stormreach. Home to war criminals, dissidents, and soldiers who wish to keep the war alive, the city offers many opportunities for adventures based on the Last War. Characters could start a new movement or fight one that already exists, such as the Swords of Karrn or the Brelish antimonarchists. Political intrigue can occur in any city in Khorvaire, but in Stormreach it can occur out in the open.

Mingling with Monsters: With giants, drow, sahuagin, and others, Stormreach is home to more monsters than any other city outside Droaam. Stormreach provides a chance to interact with these creatures in a neutral environment and can serve as a starting point for adventures among the Thunder Sea's sahuagin clans; among the Qaltiar drow and their conflict with the Sulatar drow, the dreaded firebinders (SX51); and among other groups. Beyond this, Stormreach offers chances to associate with humans whom many would describe as monsters. When characters come to the Black Freighter for a tankard of ale, they might find a knight of the Emerald Claw, a priest of the Blood of Vol, and one of the Inspired having a discussion with a cultist of the Dragon Below or an Aurum Concordian. Stormreach is a neutral city, and justice is in the hands of the individual. Adventurers can therefore

end up associating with people they would normally see on the other end of a blade.

A Small Pond: Stormreach's size, as well as its remoteness, means that many services expected from a larger city are unavailable. Merchants have limited funds, and selections of magic items and services are restricted. The city's size has a flip side; PCs can be big fish in a small pond. They would have a difficult time destroying the Boromar Clan in Sharn; the criminal organization is simply too large, too influential, too entrenched. But they could eliminate the Bilge Rats or the Swords of Karrn in Stormreach. The fight would be difficult—and a new group could rise to fill the void

left behind—but the characters' actions could have a lasting impact on the city's balance of power.

Characters should also find it easy to make a reputation and to cross paths with other major players in the city. This isn't Sharn, with hundreds of thousands of people. PCs can meet gang and militia leaders, dragonmarked viceroys, and the Storm Lords themselves. Player characters are remarkable people, and in Stormreach that gets noticed.

This is only the beginning. Hundreds of adventure paths crisscross Stormreach, some of which are discussed in detail in this book.

TWENTY STORMREACH ADVENTURES

1. The Battalion of the Basalt Towers (page 125) is preparing to launch another major offensive against the city, and the Storm Lords need a small team to deliver a critical preemptive strike.

2. An agent of Storm Lord Kirris Sel Shadra asks the PCs to dispose of a body beyond the city's borders. Seems a simple task, and the price is right. What could go wrong?

3. Aging Storm Lord Yorrick Amanatu seeks a magical artifact said to restore youth. It is located deep in the wilds of Xen'drik, and the lord is willing to pay handsomely for it. Storm Lord Paulo Omaren makes a counteroffer, promising rewards and influence if the adventurers give Lord Yorrick a cursed relic instead.

4. Someone is murdering the Ninth Wands (page 76). If the characters are Aundairians, they will be asked to help. If they are enemies of Aundair, they might be framed for the murders.

5. Storm Lord Paulo Omaren hires the adventurers to investigate House Kundarak and to discover what lies beneath the Tower of Kol Korran.

6. Dannel's Wrath (page 75) takes hostages at the inn where the adventurers are staying. Can the PCs stop the situation without the loss of innocent life?

7. A devastated Riedran expedition bound for Dar Qat (SX 20) stumbles into Stormreach, bearing a cursed artifact from the Dal Quor invasion.

8. The Swords of Karrn (page 77) and the Knights of Thrane (page 75) are fighting an escalating war of retribution. Mercenary work can be found with either side, though investigation reveals a third party is pitting the two factions against each other.

9. Adventurers discover a Tairnadal crypt in the dungeons beneath the city. If the PCs defeat the undead elves and take their treasures, they will have to face Valenar elves who want to reclaim their ancestors' relics.

10. Naleen Lassite, daughter of the popular Storm Lord Varen Lassite, has been kidnapped, and the PCs have been framed for the crime. Suddenly Stormreach's

most wanted criminals, the PCs must move quickly and carefully to clear their names.

11. A thri-kreen approaches the party and indicates that they should follow him, but he will not speak. If they follow, he leads them to a powerful monster lurking in the undercity. But what drew the mantis warrior to the PCs?

12. A magical infection is spreading through the city. Is it an ancient curse triggered by unwise explorers or an arcane weapon being tested by the Dragonhawk (page 76)?

13. Jirian Zayne (page 63) has been poisoned within the Keep of the Silver Flame, and the venom resists all magical healing. The PCs must recover the antivenom from the Hantar'kul drow and hunt down the mysterious assassin.

14. A group of powerful Khorvairian benefactors offer the party nearly unlimited resources to uncover the true identity of the individual called the Dragonhawk (page 76).

15. The blind sculptor Mazrath the Maker (page 26) requires an escort to a secret rendezvous in the Xen'drik jungle.

16. One or more of the adventurers are arrested on trumped-up charges and sentenced to a week in the Red Ring (page 46).

17. Something has driven the undead court of the Shrouds (page 72) to madness. Now waves of elf ghosts and wraiths assault the surface world, howling in rage.

18. A renowned Stormreach inquisitive asks the PCs help to avenge his sister's death at the hands of the psychotic Jacques the Hook (page 72).

19. Tulea Wylkes (page 60), mother of the city's new Harbor Lord, hires the PCs to act as bodyguards for her delinquent socialite son.

20. An unlikely gang of drow, sahuagin, and thri-kreen warriors threaten to disrupt the power balance in the city. Who could possibly create, or control, such an alliance?



"Surely it is the benevolence of the Flame that allows children to prosper in such a place," Marcus said.

Petra sighed. "That, and foolish priests who don't know when they're being robbed."

CHAPTER ONE

LIFE IN STORMREACH

New to the city, are ya? Ha! I have an eye for fresh fish. Well, let me be the first to welcome you to Stormreach, friends! Mind the gangplank there; the piers aren't as sturdy as they used to be! Oh, him? Never ye mind, just step right over him. Passed out drunk most like . . . or dead. Whew! Ya smell that? Definitely dead. Not to worry, just step over here out of his stink so we can get better acquainted. Right this way—oops! Is it already Zor? Let's go the other way. The hobgoblins on them slave ships over yonder—they aren't too picky about telling passersby from cargo, if you get my meaning.

There we are! Off the piers and in one piece too! You'll do fine here, I'm nearly certain of it. Dangerous? Well I suppose any city can be. You've heard tales as tall as Sharn's towers I'm sure, but truth be told, Stormreach is a quiet town—watch yourself there, lad. Don't go that way; the Bilge Rats don't like people snooping around those warehouses, not one bit. Just between you and me, Old Larkom Snidd went lurking there last week. Found him bobbing in the Under-harbor sewage with his own entrails wiggling about him like a big patch of pink 'n' red seaweed . . . think it was Larkom at least, hard to tell with his face chewed clean off and his body all bloated. Corpses is like sponges in the sea water, ya know. Anyhow, what were I saying? Oh yeah, don't believe those rumors about Stormreach. She's a mighty fine town, you'll see."

—Migra, goodwill ambassador of Stormreach
and expert pickpocket

WHAT THE CITY OFFERS

Hundreds arrive in Stormreach every month to start their lives anew, seek their fortune, hunt old enemies, or shrug off their homelands' laws. Some come for freedom, others chase dreams of adventure, and many travel to the remote city as a last resort.

Unless the player characters grew up in Stormreach, how they find their way to this city of vice and peril can be an adventure in itself. A heist gone wrong, a simple bodyguard mission that turns into a regicidal frame-up, a fragment of their past pointing like a

compass to the city, or any other strange occurrence can set the PCs' course for Stormreach.

A PLACE TO LIE LOW

No city is more suited for ducking the law than Stormreach, where the Storm Lords spurn any attempts by the Five Nations to enforce the Code of Galifar within their domain. Built on piracy, the city rewards those with a taste for crime. Felons, war criminals, and even regicides can leave their pasts behind, for as a common saying goes, the city's muck, blood, and tides wash sins away. Or perhaps most crimes simply seem trifling compared to the villainy here.

PCs who have troubled pasts, whose deeds bring agents of the law hard at their heels, might choose Stormreach as an escape. And those who are branded as outcasts elsewhere can walk in the open here, with no fear of persecution. If the PCs are framed for a crime, Stormreach is a place for them to lie low and gather their wits and resources before returning home to prove their innocence.

Stormreach is also an ideal place to spend ill-gotten loot. No one cares here how you came by your coin. The city's brothels, drug parlors, and gambling houses find all that glitters to their liking, regardless of how much blood they need to wipe away to see the sparkle. PCs laden with dirty gold will find no port more ready to take it. In a city of pirates, all tender is legal.

The city is the perfect place to launder money as well. Those with an interest in bringing their disreputable fortunes back to the Five Nations can cleanse them in the mire of Stormreach. Gambling on the Red Ring's matches or purchasing gems discovered in the city's ruins are two of the many ways to turn dirty money into unmarked valuables. Just be sure not to purchase cleverly masked knockoffs peddled by the Hollow Shards, lest you exchange your gold for garbage.

THRILLS FOR THE DARING

The bold can find few places better to seek adventure than in Xen'drik, whether probing cyclopean ruins, battling jungle tribes, slaying mighty giants and claiming their hoards, braving volcanoes, digging in

the Menechtarun desert for ancient secrets, or conquering Stormreach's streets. The city is the gateway to the shattered land, and below its streets, in the dark places once presided over by lost civilizations, lie untold treasures.

Many are drawn to Stormreach like moths to a flame, and often with the same result. The city does not suffer the foolhardy lightly. Still they come by the hundreds to make corpses for porters to drag from the streets. Those with heroic hearts just might survive the city's dangers, from cutthroats in its alleys to monsters in its dungeons, and become legends.

Stormreach is a holy city for fortune hunters, explorers, and vagabonds. It is an adventurer's proving ground. Those who have scratched its perilous underbelly and survived are part of an exclusive club. You're really somebody when you've been to Stormreach and dared the wilds of Xen'drik beyond.

EVIL TO HUNT

Stormreach—you will find no greater den of villainy on the face of Eberron. The city's pseudonyms, from the Pirate's Haven to the Nest of Vipers, are too many to list. Here war criminals with the blood of hundreds on their hands consort with dragonmarked scions, Storm Lords, and reputable merchants.

Where evil hides, heroes dare. PCs might have to cross the Thunder Sea to find a traitor whose actions nearly destroyed the Brelish crown, track down the hobgoblin who killed a sibling or dear friend, or find the duplicitous changeling who ruined their lives.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Stormreach is unlike any city in Khorvaire. Look along the harbor and consider what you see. A hill giant and a pair of House Tharashk orcs are loading dragonshard onto a House Lyrandar cargo ship. A goblin merchant haggles with a pair of elves from Aerenal. A dwarf dressed in the robes of the Sovereign Host and a human in the colors of the Silver Flame debate religion with a sahuagin priest draped in seaweed and bones. Adventurers, scholars, mystics—all can find their way to Stormreach.

The city is small, but many residents take pride in it. A visitor to Sharn is likely to get lost in the teeming masses. You'll quickly get to know the people of Stormreach, and you'll have a chance to meet even the most important people of the city. Wander the market for a day, and you'll likely see Lord Lassite. Take a week and you might know half the artisans, all the innkeepers, and the city's magistrates—hopefully because you've been drinking with them and not because they're sending you to the Red Ring!

The city is growing rapidly. According to a Korranberg census, the city had about nine thousand residents in 996 YK. Estimates suggest that more than two thousand immigrants have joined them since then, and more are arriving every day. With the Last War at an end, there's been a groundswell of interest in the city. Refugees who lost their homes in Khorvaire come in search

THE MANY FACES OF STORMREACH

Stormreach is not easily defined. Visitors get different impressions, and only someone who resides here for a while sees its many faces.

City of Adventure: Perched at the edge of Xen'drik, Stormreach is a haven for adventurers, explorers, and scholars ready to plunge into the jungle to discover its secrets. With the wild continent at its gates, the city is the best launching point for an expedition into the interior.

City of Diversity: Stormreach is a haven for outcasts from around the world. Sarlonan refugees, Lhazaarites, Seren barbarians, warforged, halflings, shifters, drow, thri-kreen, and expatriates of all Five Nations make their home here or pass through. You can find almost any kind of person, and many monsters, roaming Stormreach's streets.

City of Dungeons: Dozens of civilizations have come and gone in the mighty ruins where the pirates made their home. Below modern Stormreach, a ruined undercity extends deep into the earth, filled with ancient treasures and evils.

City of Freedom: The Storm Lords do not bow to the Code of Galifar, and few substances and trades are illegal in their city. One can enjoy even the most decadent delights in Stormreach, even those forbidden in the world's other great cities.

City of Oppression: Power in Stormreach is concentrated in the hands of a few. The destitute are desperate, and laborers have no rights. There's no justice here, and the only opportunity is what you make yourself.

City of Opportunity: Anyone can become anything in Stormreach. A war criminal can rise high, and a beggar can crown himself king of a merchant empire here. Treasures lie below the streets. The opportunity to engage in illicit business is everywhere. Artists scorned elsewhere gain notoriety in the city, and outcasts from the Five Nations might become magistrates of a district tribunal. The sky is the limit, and the city's ruins reach up to it. Just be sure they don't crumble beneath you as you climb.

of a fresh start. Academics seek answers to Xen'drik's mysteries. The dragonmarked houses see untapped potential in the lands beyond the city's walls. And so the population grows and the city expands. Moreover, transients steadily flow through—hundreds of merchants, sailors, explorers, and others who remain for a few days before passing on to the next port of call.

As a newcomer to Stormreach, you'll notice a wild diversity in the citizens' wealth. Although none of the oldest families are nobles in the traditional sense, they have turned the treasures of their pirate ancestors into vast fortunes. The city's unique opportunities lure dragonmarked heirs, nobles from the Five Nations, and explorers who have recovered great wealth from the continent's interior. Menial laborers mingle with them, along with war refugees, especially Cyrans. The Storm Lords are working to find gainful employment for them and other unfortunates, but this will take time. For now, wealthy visitors are advised to take their evening entertainment in Respite, the Marketplace, or the Temple district. The Harbor district, Locksmith Square, and Dannel's Pride are best avoided after sunset.

The city was established by people from across Khorvaire, from the Shadow Marches to the Lhazaar Principalities, so immigrants from the Five Nations have always made up a large part of the population. Even before the Last War, many settlers were patriots who sought a place out of Galifar's reach to practice their traditions. Now that the old kingdom is broken, this patriotic spirit is even greater. Many of the city's wards have been settled by people of a particular nationality, and travelers are warned to consider that when visiting; Thranes rarely receive a friendly welcome in the Karrn-dominated Grindstone ward.

HISTORY OF THE CITY

Stormreach has a remarkable history. Tens of thousands of years ago, a city built by giants stood on the same location. That city's remnants are visible throughout Stormreach, including the great statue that looks out over the harbor, the rings of standing stones that radiate magic, the colossal walls that divide the city's districts, and more. Sahuagin and thri-kreen communities also left their marks here.

The Library of Korranberg is filled with books about Xen'drik, and the god Aureon himself could not condense its past into a few paragraphs. But the history of Stormreach is another matter. In the decades before 802 YK, Riedra had been exploiting Xen'drik's resources for centuries, and smugglers from Breland and Zilargo probed the coast. As trade flourished in the Thunder Sea, pirates from Breland, Cyre, Zilargo, and even the Lhazaar Principalities began preying on ships there.

Piracy and smuggling grew ever more profitable in the region, and captains needed a base to resupply their ships. Smugglers established hideouts along the coast,

but most were quickly destroyed by monsters or marauding dark elves. The captains needed a secure refuge. Some claim it was Delera Omaren, pirate queen of the Thunder Sea, who laid the first stones of Stormreach. Others say it was Kolis Sel Shadra, the wily smuggler said to have a fleet of spectral ships. Whoever began the project, it soon became a joint venture, with many captains contributing resources in exchange for sanctuary. The walls of the giant ruins provided simple fortifications, and jungle predators seemed to shun the city.

The outpost grew and prospered, as did piracy on the Thunder Sea. Delera Omaren and Korchan Amanatu left bloody wakes in the water, and emboldened pirates began preying on Zil, Aerenal, and Lyrandar shipping. And all the while, the dragonmarked houses became increasingly interested in Xen'drik's hidden resources.

The dragonmarked houses finally appealed to Galifar to bring an end to the piracy, and in 800 YK the king took action. Galifar's greatest strength was on land, yet the royal navy was a power to be reckoned with. After a few battles filled with bitter losses on both sides, a gnome smuggler appeared in the court of Galifar. Kolis Sel Shadra was known by his reputation as the smuggler who had never lost a cargo. He represented the four most powerful pirate captains of the Thunder Sea: Delera Omaren, Yorrick Amanatu, Molou Lassite, and himself. He offered a truce—if Galifar would grant these captains amnesty and authority, the four would use their influence to disperse the pirates. After extended negotiations, the king agreed in 802 YK, and even promised to join the dragonmarked houses in funding Stormreach's expansion. But he insisted on one condition: that he appoint a fifth lord who had his trust. There was much debate, but in time, the four captains—now called Coin Lords—agreed to grant the privateer Jolan Wylkes the title of Harbor Lord and for the five of them to rule the city together as Storm Lords. Wylkes was a sailor, as opposed to the nobles who were first suggested. He and his descendants held to their vow, and the Coin Lords lived up to their end of the bargain.

For nearly two centuries, Stormreach has grown and prospered. Several dragonmarked houses have established sizable enclaves in the city, and the kuryeva of Molou's Distillery is prized across southern Khorvaire. There have been times of trouble—the Omaren Revolt in 890 YK and the attack by an army of giants in 946 YK—but the city perseveres. Today, with the great war over, Stormreach is stronger than ever.

ARCHITECTURE

Many of Stormreach's buildings and monuments are ancient, but while many old cities are built upon the refinement and expansion of a style, Stormreach is built upon change, upon necessity, upon the mixture of many styles, both ancient and modern. The city's districts have their own overall styles, defined by the



Every scene in Stormreach is a study in contrasts

inhabitants and their occupations, but the districts are still a mishmash of new buildings amid, and atop, the old.

Even with the city's chaos of architectural styles, its districts have common features, all arising from Stormreach's unique character.

BROKEN PILLARS

Stormreach is full of broken pillars of various degrees of antiquity, though few remain standing. Those that do are significant landmarks. These snapped-off columns once supported the roofs of giants' dwellings or decorated the outsides of their temples. Now they serve other purposes. Some have been turned into watchtowers, helpful in spotting fires and directing fire-fighting efforts. Others have become so encrusted with

ropes and ramshackle dwellings that they resemble a rock covered in mussels. Most, however, have suffered the fate of being quarried for stone to pave roads, patch city walls, and build new dwellings.

CIRCLE OF VISIONS

Scattered around the city are twelve stone rings, each radiating an aura of moderate illusion magic. About once a month, a *programmed image* appears at night in the center of one of the circles. Sometimes the image is lovely, and sometimes a long-dead giant appears, whose name and history are no longer known. Other times these illusions are disturbing, showing images that people believe to be forewarnings or showing places deep in Xen'drik's jungles that are believed to have been outposts of the giants or their enemies.

THE ESSENCE OF STORMREACH

Stormreach is filled with fragments of ancient magic, from the Circle of Visions to the chunks of rubble floating above the streets. Over the centuries, enterprising artificers have used the retain essence ability to try to

tap into the power of these objects. This is a mistake. An artificer who taps into this energy immediately takes 4d6 points of damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1 hour.

FLOATING RUINS

The magic of Xen'drik is legendary, and the faded glory of the past can still be seen in Stormreach today. The city had a number of floating fortresses, mansions, and towers in past centuries. Time, war, and disaster broke them, but remnants float in place or drift in patterns above the city, and sometimes beyond.

Some of the ruins remain serviceable, albeit ramshackle, and a few wealthy citizens have claimed them for their own, patching and rebuilding them. Other floating chunks of masonry are treated like islands, built upon by enterprising people. Under a few of the larger chunks, wooden homes hang perilously and are reachable by knotted ropes and ladders, which can be drawn up, affording the inhabitants a secure, if precarious, existence.

The most picturesque ruins collected seabird guano until a windblown seed or two germinated, creating islands of tangled plants. A riot of color, these islands' roots flutter in the wind.

PERMANENT IMPERMANENCE

Many of the homes in Stormreach look temporary: tents, huts, and shacks that seem as if they were thrown together on a whim. Visitors are surprised to discover that many of these driftwood huts and canvas tents have been handed down from generation to generation.

Especially in the poorer districts, the city has a culture of making do, patching up, and never throwing something useful away. This applies as much to buildings as it does to pots and pans, clothing, and other items. Old rowboats are built into roofs to keep the rain out, and tents are patched, stitched, and layered over and over until they are as thick as a wall. A building that was once a temple to a forgotten deity might be turned into a brewery and then a storehouse, and finally the brewing vats might be capped off with conical roofs and turned into houses, surrounded by the temple ruins.

Nothing is wasted: driftwood, canvas, hide, whalebone, flotsam, and stone. The people of Stormreach show endless ingenuity in their use of materials that would be rubbish in other cities.

THE NARROWS

The ancient city was laid out according to a plan devised by the giants, but few signs of that plan remain. Each occupying culture has complicated it, and each collapse has wrought new chaos upon what was once an ordered city.

The ancient city's decline and the organic, unplanned development of its successors have turned the streets into a tangle, which changes with every wave of immigrants, every flood, and every fire. The city is further reconfigured by the occasional collapse of sewers, tunnels, and caves beneath it.



The people of Stormreach have built around the ancient giant ruins

The upshot of this for visitors is that, aside from a few broad streets the Storm Lords keep clear by decree, the city is a mess of narrow and ever-changing streets. Getting lost is easy, especially in the residential districts where the layout is far more complicated than the city's population would suggest.

THE OLDEST STONE

The ancient city's visible ruins were once important buildings or monuments. Many were protected by magic and have therefore weathered the millennia better than their neighbors. The oldest ruins mark the places where Stormreach is most stable. The giants knew the land and built to last; although ancient structures might be hidden beneath newer ones, they endure.

In the caverns and tunnels beneath the city, the ruins are less worn and more intact. The undercity's denizens build around and tunnel through these ruins, ever expanding the city below the city. In the harbor lie the ruins that have been reclaimed by the waves, infested by sahuagin and full of ancient artifacts.

Where the old stone lies the leaders of Stormreach abide, their palaces and mansions built on the

sturdiest foundations. They draw legitimacy as much from the ruins' symbols as from might or riches.

THE RIGGING

Stormreach was not originally built for the people who live there now. For much of its history, it was occupied by giants, and its buildings recall that past, from its enormous drains to its high steps and towering columns. A human or elf, let alone a halfling or gnome, would have a difficult time climbing over and around these edifices were it not for "the rigging."

When citizens mention the city's rigging, they mean the steps that have been carved into some massive stones or the wooden ladders and staircases bolted into or leaned against others. Or they mean the nets and knotted ropes they use to scramble over the ruins or the rope bridges, high above the streets, that crisscross the city. Where the ropes and bridges are especially dense, shanties are suspended in the air, often from the underside of a floating ruin.

SCUPPERS

The city is named for the storms that batter Xen'drik's coast and that often engulf the city in lightning flashes and torrential rain. This rain was merely an annoyance to the giants; a flood to the smaller races is but a puddle to them. Moreover, the ancient city's enormous sewer system, along with its broad and open streets, allowed rainwater to drain away quickly.

Today, the city is cluttered and congested, its streets filled with tents, market stalls, and boarding houses. Many drains are blocked by rubbish, and others have been sealed by the monsters that lurk in the sewers. Despite the Storm Lords' efforts to have the drains cleared, most are useless for much of the year.

The few working drains usually flow like rapids, and the rest of the city's rainwater drains from the surface, down into the harbor. Somehow this haphazard drainage system works. First, many newer buildings are built on stilts, which lets rainwater flow beneath and keeps the buildings out of the reach of vermin. Second, when a neighborhood floods, the residents create channels to allow the water to drain onto nearby streets, and often into someone else's neighborhood.

As rain falls, it follows a complex network of improvised channels, which run together onto broad streets that feed the water to the harbor. Stormreachers call these streets scuppers, after the drainage holes on ships. New settlers are sometimes washed away when the water flows rapidly, not knowing to keep clear of the scuppers during heavier storms.

STONE HEADS

In every district, carved stone heads lean against walls, lie in the street, and teeter on ledges. Once a part of long-lost statues, the heads resemble giants and have a variety of expressions and hairstyles. Most of them

cluster in groups of three or more, though some have been towed away, built into walls, or simply piled up. Because of a folktale that they bear a deadly curse, very few have been quarried.

Some of the city's older residents claim that the heads' expressions have changed over time, reflecting the ancient giants' opinions of the modern city and its people. Other residents occasionally lay offerings on the heads and reverently clear them of moss, lichen, and dirt.

UNSAFE FOOTING

Wealthy neighborhoods such as Stormhaven and Coasthold are built on solid ground and have relatively clear streets, but other neighborhoods are riddled with hazards. Tunnels and ancient sewers shift or subside, flash floods crash through during storms, persistent humidity rots rope and wood, and shacks, even those that have survived generations, suddenly collapse. The next plank in the bridge might break, the rope might snap, or the tarp might be more mold than tarp—as you discover when you put your weight on it.

AUTHORITY FIGURES

This free city is governed by the Storm Lords, a hereditary council formed by the five families that founded modern Stormreach in 802 YK. Each family monitors a particular region of the city, and together they oversee most of the city's industries.

A Storm Lord wields absolute power within the city, governing both trade and justice. Because the lords balance each other, this power rarely turns into tyranny. All citizens of Stormreach respect the Storm Lords—or at least their influence over the Stormreach Guard. The Storm Lords are a frequent topic of conversation in the city's taverns and common rooms, and Lord Jonas Wylkes and Lord Varen Lassite often mingle with the city's people. Keep your eyes open and you might see one of them!

The current Storm Lords and their families are described below.

Lord Yorrick Amanatu, Coin Lord of Respite and Silverwall. A venerable dwarf, Lord Yorrick is one of the city's founders. His family trains and organizes the Stormreach Guard. An old maxim states, "The Amanatus are the steel of Stormreach."

Lord Varen Lassite, Coin Lord of Cross and the Marketplace. The Lassites are master brewers and frequently sponsor festivals and feasts. As a result, Lord Varen is easily the most popular of the Storm Lords.

Lady Kirris Sel Shadra, Coin Lord of Southwatch and Oldgate. A family of gnomes, the Sel Shadras maintain a low profile for lords of the city. Some say that the Sel Shadras have connections throughout the city's underworld, but it is unwise to spread such rumors.

Lady Paulo Omaren, Coin Lord of Forgelight and the Temple district. The Omarens are the city's premier smiths; their forge produces the arms and armor of the Stormreach Guard. Lady Paulo is a passionate young woman who claimed her current position with her blade.

Lord Jonas Wylkes, Harbor Lord overseeing the Harbor district and the shipping trade. Rumors abound of this young lord's debauchery.

LAW AND ORDER

The only justice in Stormreach is justice you make for yourself, or justice you pay for. On the city's mean streets, skulduggery and foul play are legitimate means of making a living. Victims of violent crime are blamed for their own fate by some citizens and are a source of amusement for others.

Though laws exist on record in Stormreach, few bother to enforce most of them. The true law of the land is simple: Don't make trouble for the Storm Lords. You can often make all the trouble you want for someone else. As long as a crime does not impact the city's economy or security too greatly, it is most likely to be ignored by the powers that be. That said, if you cross the wrong people, you can quickly find yourself on the business end of a guard's sword or an Iron Watch armblade.

Crime and punishment is subjective in Stormreach. Whom you know determines what you can get away with, and whom you anger determines the ramifications of a crime. You can rob ten people in the morning and laugh about it with corrupt members of the Stormreach Guard in the afternoon. But knock out the tooth of Lord Jonas Wylkes's cousin or kill the fence who's working for Lady Kirris Sel Shadra, and those same guards will beat you to death in the middle of the street without even saying hello.

The most effective way to get away with crimes in Stormreach is not to rock the boat. Any act that disrupts the city's lucrative trade, or stops the steady stream of gold from flowing into the Storm Lords' coffers, brings the full weight of the city's power down on the perpetrator.

THE STORMREACH GUARD

Anyone who knows how to use a sword can try for a place in the Stormreach Guard. Your past is irrelevant; all that matters is your willingness to forget past loyalties and to serve the Storm Lords. As a result, the guard is a mixture of ruffians, war criminals and fugitives from the Five Nations, former soldiers still itching for a fight, and a handful of people who actually care about the law. They randomly patrol the streets and are as likely to ignore a crime as they are to intervene.

Guards who do their best to uphold justice find the obstacles in their path daunting. Rampant cor-

ruption in the Guard's upper echelons makes displays of heroics potentially threatening to a guard's continued employment. By doing their job, these devoted guards put pressure on their fellows to do the same, and the city's rabble is much easier to dupe when no one steps out of line to help them. Also, busting criminals who paid bribes to higher-ranking guards ensures dire consequences.

The city's gangs and militias are well aware of the Guard's boundaries. They know the battlegrounds that guards will leave alone. The Titans might fight the Storm Hammers in the alleys of Dannel's Pride, but they would never cross blades in the heart of the Marketplace. Common sense is the key to avoiding an encounter with the Stormreach Guard or the Iron Watch; you can brawl freely in Locksmith Square, but keep your sword in its sheath in Respite.

THE IRON WATCH

Rowdy adventurers and power-crazed spellcasters might not fear the Stormreach Guard, but the city has a second line of defense to deal with serious threats: the Iron Watch. This is an elite company of warforged soldiers, constructs built for battle and sworn to the service of Stormreach. These warforged are well equipped, highly skilled, and utterly fearless. They are not wasted on simple patrols, but if the Guard cannot handle a problem, the warforged are deployed. See page 117 for more on the Iron Watch.

INQUISITIVES

The Stormreach Guard's indifference to many crimes means that independent sleuths are in high demand. When people want a theft or murder investigated and have coin to pay, they might hire a House Tharashk inquisitive to ascertain the particulars of the crime. Citizens lacking the funds for a Tharashk scion can turn to freelance inquisitives licensed by the Finders Guild.

Those with the skills to ferret out criminals can make a good living in Stormreach, provided they stay alive long enough to spend their wages. In a city plagued by crime and corruption, someone who hunts criminals for a living can survive only through cunning and powerful friends. Catching criminals in the city is a matter of dancing with the devils you know in order to catch the ones you don't; most inquisitives make deals with gangs and corrupt officials. Some inquisitives promise to lay off any case involving the Bilge Rats in exchange for information about someone else's crimes. Others cozy up to powerful militia leaders, Red Ring stablemasters, or the Stormreach Guard in the hope they will offer protection when criminals come looking for payback.

MAGISTRATES

Magistrates appointed by the Storm Lords (mostly gnomes of the Sel Shadra line) pass judgment over

offenders. Summary justice is the rule, and the accused are nearly always found guilty. However, the city's erratic sense of justice can occasionally work in the accused's favor; when crime runs rampant, general amnesties are occasionally handed down from the Storm Lords for no other reason than to relieve the magistrates of their burdens.

People guilty of minor infractions (petty theft, brawling, and the like) rarely go before a magistrate, assuming they paid off the Stormreach Guard. If they do end up on trial, they are usually levied hefty fines for clogging the wheels of justice as a result of not bribing a guard. Those who cannot pay a fine are subject to exile; the lucky ones get put on the next boat to Khorvaire, and the unlucky are sent into the wilds of Xen'drik. The city has only two punishments for more serious crimes: death and the Red Ring.

Public executions are carried out in the Marketplace on Sar, the seventh day of the week. The executions have a carnival atmosphere and bring out families in droves to take in the gruesome spectacle. The exact means of death is decided by the magistrates: hanging,

drawing and quartering, evisceration, flaying alive, and any other method that pleases the crowd.

Storm Lord Kirris Sel Shadra oversees jurisprudence, an area viewed as a headache by the other lords. The clever gnome manages to turn a tidy profit by sending violent criminals to the Red Ring, receiving kickbacks from the stablemasters. The gold she receives is only one benefit. Strong ties with the Blood Council (particularly Malketh Zolark) allow Lady Kirris to borrow bloodbound—the ring's greatest gladiators—when she needs their violent skills to deal with someone who dares to oppose her enterprises.

Criminals sentenced to the Red Ring are given the chance to fight their way to freedom. Their status can be appealed after a period of time set by the magistrate, and anyone who wins a title bout is automatically paroled. PCs who commit, or are framed for, crimes might end up in the ring fighting for their freedom and survival.

More information about the Red Ring can be found on page 46.

MEET THE GUARD

Crossing paths with the Stormreach Guard is not unlike a random draw of Three-Dragon Ante; sometimes you get Bahamut, and sometimes you get the Fool.

When the PCs cross paths with a patrol, use the following descriptions as inspiration.

Sleepyhead (N male human warrior 1): This guard is either totally exhausted or just narcoleptic; he keeps dozing off while interacting with the party.

Ladies' Man (CN male elf expert 2): Armed with a lute, a crooked smile, and too much cologne, this guard joined up because he thinks the uniform helps him attract women. If a comely woman is present, he tries to work his magic; otherwise he couldn't care less.

Drunkard (N male half-orc barbarian 1): This burly guard is deep in his cups, though he tries his hardest to feign otherwise. He misses salient details, chuckles at inappropriate times, and flies into a drunken tirade about how hard his job is if confronted about his condition.

Faker (CE female half-elf rogue 2): This half-elf is not a guard at all. She bought her uniform from an actual guard and tries her best to play the part. She wants the PCs to move along before her friends emerge from a nearby storefront with stolen loot.

Little Tough Guy (CN male halfling barbarian 2): This little guard shoulders derision both from his peers and criminals. As a result, he's developed a mean streak to put a bulette's to shame. He blames the PCs for anything bad that transpires and jumps up on

a barrel or chair to get in their face and poke them in the chest as he threatens and berates them.

Stomach Trouble (N male dwarf warrior 2): This usually competent guard devoured a plate of bad squid earlier and now has urgent need of an outhouse. He tries his best to hide his duress and attempts to resolve any matters as swiftly as possible.

By the Book (LN female human expert 3): Every year the city fells a few dozen trees to print a list of ordinances and edicts, and every year most guards toss their copies in the nearest fire. Not so with this one. She clutches it as if it were a spellbook, though no one is sure why she bothers since she can recite it from memory. She cites the PCs for every minor infraction (disturbing the peace, illegal munitions, reckless spellcasting) and fines them mercilessly (she is bribe-proof).

Starstruck (CG male human commoner 2/warrior 1): This guard has heard all about the PCs' recent exploits and is mightily impressed. He lets them off for any minor crimes and begs to join them. If refused, he sulks but remains a possible ally.

Fallen (LG female ex-paladin 5): This guard was a devoted scourge of evil until she took part in a massacre in the Last War. Ashamed of her misdeed, she believes that Stormreach is the only place she belongs. But her devotion to good is unchecked, and she might aid a party in acts that serve a noble cause.

Dead (N male human): This guard stumbles toward the party, his mouth working but no words coming out. He collapses at their feet, his throat slit.



The Stormreach Guard is a motley bunch

CRIME

Stormreach has Xen'drik's treasures and resources at its finger tips. Where opportunity arises so does crime. The city is crawling with scam artists, thieves, murderers, and escaped felons from the Five Nations. Many come to the city looking for a new start in the Stormreach Guard or to reinvent themselves as upstanding citizens. But most cannot leave their criminal tendencies behind and end up weaving new schemes, waylaying the unwary, and slitting purses or throats.

The city is the perfect place to lie low after committing some horrible act in Khorvaire or to spend the profits of a heist. Ill-gotten coin is as good as honest currency in Stormreach, and criminals come here to launder large amounts of it or to sell stolen goods that are too hot for the fences of Khorvaire.

Stormreach is home to a large number of gangs and other criminal groups. On a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check, a character knows something about one of them.

The Bilge Rats: A vicious gang that dominates the Harbor district. Their name comes from their fondness for trained dire rats, and for having said rats chew off the faces of anyone who crosses the gangs.

The Hollow Shards: An alliance of forgers and con artists spread across the city. Augurs, cartographers,

guides, and others can always turn out to be members of the Hollow Shards.

The Night Tide: The black market of Stormreach, a source of many goods restricted under the Code of Galifar.

The Quickfoot Gang: An organization supposedly coordinating the activities of many criminal organizations in the city.

The Shrouds: A street gang whose members walk the streets wrapped in crimson shrouds. Rumors say that their numbers include ghouls and zombies.

The Titans: A gang of half-giant brawlers, who frequently pick fights with the smaller races.

MILITIAS

Life is cheap on the edge of Xen'drik, and the only way to ensure a safe future is to have a weapon close at hand. Throughout the history of Stormreach, many ethnic and religious groups have formed militias—people ready to defend their friends and neighbors from any threats.

After hearing tales of the harsh justice of the Swords of Karrn or the violent actions of Dannel's Wrath, newcomers to Stormreach might have the impression that the militias represent a lack of control on the part of the Storm Lords. Such fears are unfounded. The Storm Lords allow the militias to exist out of respect for the

diverse cultural values of the city's people. However, many of these values are tied to hostility toward other ethnic, national, or religious groups. A traveler is therefore advised to consider the following and to avoid wards dominated by hostile forces.

Swords of Karrn: The Swords of Karrn have recently appeared in the Grindstone ward of Southwatch. The exiled Karrnathi warlord Drago Thul leads this band of hardened veterans. The Swords have sought to ease the burden of the Stormreach Guard by maintaining order in Grindstone. Travelers should be warned that Drago is obsessed with the pursuit of justice, and that many minor offenses overlooked in the wider city—thief, minor assault, indecent behavior—will be punished in Grindstone.

Knights of Thrane: This group operates in the Embers ward of Oldgate. Karrns and worshipers of the Blood of Vol, the Dark Six, or other exotic religious movements are advised to avoid Embers; Commander Valen Vanatar believes such faiths pose a threat to the stability of Embers and acts accordingly.

Ninth Wands: Based in the Whitewash district of Oldgate and largely drawn from Aundairian veterans, these soldiers are known for their use of war magic. Many members of the Wands are driven by the passions of the Last War, and Thrane, Karrn, and Cyran are warned to be cautious when traveling in Whitewash. However, the Wands rarely attack travelers unless provoked.

Dannel's Wrath: Drunken sailors sometimes tell tales of Dannel's Wrath. According to the stories, this Cyran militia is based in Dannel's Pride in the Cross district. People say that the Wrath is using violence as a tool to force the Storm Lords to provide more territory and recognition to Cyran refugees. However, the Storm Lords and Stormreach Guard would never condone such behavior. Travelers are nonetheless advised to avoid Dannel's Pride.

RELIGIONS

Diversity is one of Stormreach's greatest strengths, and this is as true in matters of religion as in anything else. The city's founders came from across Khorvaire, and over the decades, citizens have examined both the old ways of Khorvaire and the mysteries of Xen'drik. Stormreach is therefore home to many faiths.

For those who seek comfort in the traditional faiths, the Temple of the Sovereign Host can be found in the Forgelight district. The Keep of the Silver Flame is found in the Temple district, along with Temple Row, home to an ever-changing array of shrines. More adventurous travelers can take the traditional swim out to Shargon's Talon in the harbor or visit the Tents of Rushemé and watch one of the rituals of the ancient giant faiths. One can also try to observe a ceremonial bloodletting at the Temple of Vol in the Grindstone ward, though the priests of Vol have little patience for tourists.

THE ART SCENE

Stormreach is beyond boundaries. The Code of Galifar is a far-off murmur, and conventions of civility are often thrust aside here on the savage shore. It is a place where artists break out of tradition and frequently turn their backs on mass appeal. For good and for ill, the city has no aesthetic elite looking down its nose at unconventional artwork, and no royal decrees interfere with artistic vision.

Patronage of art can be a lightning rail to status in Stormreach. Many wealthy residents commission what they hope will be the latest masterpieces; others fund theatrical troupes whose performances would be considered licentious, or even treasonous, in a Khorvairian playhouse.

As a result, Stormreach's art scene is more vibrant than is typical in a city of its size. Many artists, performers, and playwrights banished from Khorvaire choose to spend their exile in Stormreach, plying their craft far from their enemies. Also, the city's remoteness from civilization inspires local artists to pursuits most of their Khorvairian counterparts would not imagine. The wealth of ancient sculpture, drow folksinging, and tribal dance offers the city's artists a feast of inspiration. Today's popular art is born of yesterday's avant-garde, and for explorations into art's outer limits, Stormreach is hard to beat.

The city is more than a haven for the avant-garde. Bawdy burlesques performed nightly in Forgelight pander to the district's exhausted and companionship-starved laborers. Meanwhile the classics of the Five Nations are brought to life in the extravagant Livewood Theater. Elegant galleries throughout the Temple district and Respite cater to those with a taste for fine art, offering up paintings and sculptures in classic styles.

From cathartic tragedies, sometimes played with real blood, to stunning landscape paintings of Xen'drik's interior, the city has something for most artistic palates.

THE ONYX FOUNTAIN

House Phiarlan protects and patronizes artists in Stormreach based on their talent, not their political or ethical views. To this end, the house created the Onyx Fountain, a stronghold of studios, galleries, small recital halls, rehearsal spaces, and small theaters in the Temple district. The Onyx Fountain is named for the imposing fountain of glossy black stone at its entrance. The fountain's waters flow into a dragon-shaped basin, and potent magic shapes the flowing waters into wings and scales upon the dragon's back.

The Onyx Fountain is a warren of corridors, niches, and chambers, each of which is unique. One chamber houses an elaborate illusion of frolicking fey, dancing wildflowers, and talking animals in the Faerie Court. Another contains sculptures from the Dhakaani Empire, complete with a towering relief of the Graywall

Mountains' Six Kings monument (FN 68). Others are filled with swirling spheres of emerald light and illusions of otherworldly beings whose translucent forms slowly transform. Most of the building's spaces are illuminated with multihued *everbright lanterns*.

The Fountain is not just a refuge for artists and performers, but also a hive of intrigue. Performance spaces double as training rooms for House Phiarlan agents honing the arts of stealth and infiltration. Acrobatic skill, a hypnotic voice, the ability to turn light and shadow into allies and weapons, and an imagination capable of ingenious solutions to split-second crises are what make Phiarlan spies some of the best in the world. The Fountain also hosts clandestine meetings masquerading as rehearsals or private performances.

THE LIVEMOOD THEATER

The Livemood Theater is House Phiarlan's preeminent performance space in the city. Mostly offering up classics of Brelish, Aundairian, or Cyran playwrights, the Livemood spares no expense and attracts sellout crowds to its amphitheater four days a week, Wir through Sar. The shows are often nostalgia works beating patriotic drums and offering exiles and expatriates glimpses of their distant homelands.

Epics from Thrane and Karrnath were performed in the past, but no longer. A few years ago, a large group of Karrns crashed a performance of *Rainbow Serpents Rising*. Bedlam and bloodshed ensued. Thranes responded in kind two months later during the opening performance of *Ride of the Rekkenmark*. The Livemood's manager, Zarzalia Shol d'Phiarlan (NG female elf bard 5/dragonmark heir 1), has since banned patriotic plays from both nations.

THE PLAYS OF KARKLOS IR'ILSIR

Karklos ir'Ilsir became an overnight sensation in Sharn when the production of his play *Throne of Angels* opened to rave reviews. His plays continued to astound audiences and draw standing-room-only crowds for two years following. Theater fanatics waited with bated breath for the release of each play and worshiped the playwright as if he were the son of the god Olladra herself.

The worship bolstered Karklos's urge to do more than just satisfy his audiences, driving him to challenge them instead. By his third year as Sharn's favorite playwright, his work took on a decidedly political tone. At first, King Boranel ir'Wynarn and the Brelish court turned a blind eye to treasonous underpinnings in his work, in recognition of the playwright's obvious brilliance. However, when *Who Mourns?* opened at the Sharn Opera House and riots broke out in the streets, King Boranel exiled Karklos.

Karklos found a new home in Aundair under the patronage of Queen Aurala ir'Wynarn. However, when his play *Wine, Magic, and Moonlight* opened with descriptions of the debauchery of "Queen Arielana's" exiled son "Jurianos," Karklos found himself on the

run again (for more about Prince Jurian, see *Five Nations* page 23). The playwright eventually stumbled onto the docks of Stormreach.

No one patronizes his work now, and he toils in a cramped room in Respite, not far from the Drowning Sorrows Tavern. His plays see production on occasion but rarely draw a crowd.

In the past few months, a mysterious woman named Sarquala has taken an interest in Karklos. Her blazing red hair, cool emerald eyes, and elegance immediately captured his heart, and the two are nigh inseparable now. Sarquala whispers in the playwright's ear as he works. As a result, he has written obscure plays about the wrongful imprisonment of a pantheon of immortal kings and their glorious return. Perhaps this is a harmless fancy of hers. Or perhaps she is an agent of the Lords of Dust or a devotee of the Dragon Below, and she is tailoring his works to glorify her fallen masters. Unfettered by mortal conceptions of time, rakshasa and illithid have both foreseen that Karklos's works will someday be the most performed plays in human history.

BLOODBORNE PLAYERS

A small troupe of young elves known as the Bloodborne Players offers the darkest theatrical fare in Stormreach. Most of their performances lack any narrative but instead assail the audience with haunting illusionary images and morbid displays of lifelike brutality and violence. Even their more conventional plays culminate in a horrific blood sacrifice enacted with the aid of stunning illusionary magic . . . or so most spectators believe.

Although most of the sacrifices are fake, some are quite real. In these gruesome shows, usually before small audiences, the victim is eviscerated on a dais, and the heart and head are ripped and hewn from the body shortly thereafter. Mostly these victims are captured or duped bystanders, who believe it will all be an illusion. But on occasion the troupe holds secret performances for its most loyal fans, one of whom volunteers to be sacrificed, believing his or her soul will gain immortality and glory.

The leader of the Bloodborne Players, and always the actor wielding the sacrificial blade, is a rail-thin and black-haired elf named Vortras (NE male elf cleric 5), who sports an aberrant dragonmark. The backstage master of visual effects is his cousin Dammerund (CE male elf illusionist 5), though the two could easily be twins. These twisted elves believe the act of blood sacrifice, fused with the emotional outpouring of the enraptured audience, grants them great power. If this belief is true, the elves might have stumbled onto a secret of the ancient Qabalin elves (SX 52). One thing is certain: Vortras seeks pages of the *sanguineous tome* (SX 153) and similar works on Qabalin sacrificial rites. Many suspect the troupe is connected to the Blood of Vol or the Shrouds, yet the Bloodborne Players have recently clashed with both.



*Are the horrific performances
of the Bloodborne Players staged or real?*

MAZRATH THE MAKER

In a Harbor district alley, a filthy sign sways over a ramshackle storefront and proclaims the name of the proprietor within: Mazrath the Maker. Inside is an incongruously clean gallery filled with beautiful marble sculptures of such majesty that they could have been sculpted in Syrania, the realm of angels.

The artist behind these works is Mazrath, a limping old elf with milk white eyes as blind as a grimlock's. He coaxes wonders from blocks of marble, carving them entirely by feel, and creates gods and angels from clay pottery with the caress of his well-worn hands.

Mazrath did not always spend his days creating. There was a time when his skillful hands lent their talents to endings instead. Before the Shadow Schism within House Phiarlan in 972 YK, Mazrath was called Tyrellin Paelion d'Phiarlan (LN male elf rogue 6/

shadow hunter 5) and was the favorite uncle of Lord Tolar Paelion d'Phiarlan (Dra 82). Tyrellin maintained a spy network so vast it reached the upper echelons of every dragonmarked house and plumbed the deepest dungeons and darkest alleyways across Khorvaire. When a strike force of Thuranni assassins came for him in the night, Tyrellin slew them to the last, but not before a sword slash stole his sight.

Now the old elf toils in his gallery, but rumor has it that his ears still hear more than most eyes see. Little goes on in Stormreach that Mazrath does not know, and a shadowy network still reports the goings-on of the powers behind the Five Nations, as well as every move his enemies make in the Emerald Claw, House Phiarlan, and House Thuranni. No one knows if he plans vengeance, but for the time being, the blind elf is certainly a brilliant sculptor.

FESTIVALS AND DIVERSIONS

Life in Stormreach is hard. The day-to-day struggle to survive the city's corrupt politics and rampant crime can break the spirit of the hardiest citizens. Festivals are not only relief from the grit and grind of life; they are also key to the survival of the city by helping its citizens keep their spirits up. Public executions are grand events, as are the revelries hosted by Storm Lord Varen Lassite every few months. Religious groups observe the same holidays as their counterparts in Khorvaire. But a few festivals, described below, are unique to Stormreach.

THE BURNING TITAN

Once a year on Therendor 1, to emerge from winter's cold embrace and hasten into spring, the city's residents construct a titan of wood, wicker, and oil atop the cliffs east of the House Lyrandar Shipyard. The titan represents the ancient kings of Xen'drik, who were burned away in dragonfire. The building of the titan takes six days and is itself a time of great revelry. Most of Forge-light's workers get the entire week off to help, House Phiarlan supplies entertainment around the clock, and dozens of casks of gin are consumed by the builders. The titan is set aflame at sundown on Therendor 1, and an all-night celebration of wild dancing and drinking ensues, with many revelers wearing dragon masks. The giants of Rushemé find the festival a distasteful display but shoulder the unintentional insult graciously.

PIRATE'S MOON

This spring festival, on Dravago 20, commemorates the death of pirate lord Jaldrin Arekarn, whose descendants would have been among the Storm Lords if he had had any. During the city's beleaguered early days, Jaldrin turned back assaults both from Xen'drik's interior and from rival captains who sought to seize the port for themselves. Jaldrin and his beloved, the dread captain Kilen Razorheart, engaged an entire armada of pirate vessels in the harbor. They broke

the invading fleet but were both mortally wounded by a traitor's arrow as they embraced in victory. The two fell overboard, their bodies never found. Now, on the anniversary of their victory and demise, the citizens of Stormreach celebrate in their honor, hurling offerings into the sea in the hope that the Devourer will consume the offerings instead of feasting on the two captains. Pirate's Moon is also the festival of love in Stormreach, a time of blossoming romance.

THE ANNUAL GAMES

Every summer, from Nymm 1 to 14, the Red Ring holds an open tournament in which anyone—zealous fans, adventurers, layabouts—can enter the arena to prove their mettle. The games go on for two weeks, and champions earn their weight in gold, as well as bragging rights, and the chance to join a stable as a bloodbound (see page 99).

SHACKLEBREAK

The Storm Lords are descended from pirates, and the city was once a lawless haven for the scum of the seas. In memory of its roots, Stormreach reverts to those days of bedlam once a year on Aryth 1. On that day, no crimes short of murder and arson are punished, and most of the Stormreach Guard take the day off. Chaos reigns in the

streets, and it is heightened when the Storm Lords grant amnesty to a large number of criminals, who are released from their cells at the Red Ring. Drove of revelers vandalize storefronts, pick fights, dance in the streets around bonfires, and more. Most citizens wear masks to conceal their identities. Opponents of this festival believe it is a minor manifestation of the Du'rashka Tul curse (SX 53) and that it could eventually destroy the city.

OTHER EVENTS

Sporting events are well attended in Stormreach.

Rubble Race: The city's tremendous ruins and floating rubble provide obstacle courses for occasional rubble races, spectacles of acrobatic skill. Racers charge through the city vaulting fruit stands, ascending broken pillars, racing along giant walls, and traversing floating rubble to reach the finish line. The danger of the races, and the tricks the racers play on each other, draws spectators who are less interested in the races' outcomes than in seeing death-defying leaps and deadly falls.

Tournaments of Might: Every week in the Harbor district, the Wavecrest Tavern holds its famed arm wrestling tournament, drawing contestants from across the city to test their strength. Winners receive 10 gp and free drinks for the rest of the evening.

ARM WRESTLING AT THE WAVECREST

Player characters can participate in the inn's famous tournaments of might to win the prizes: 10 gp and free drinks for the evening.

Arm wrestlers sit at a wooden table, their hands strapped together (to prevent slipping). Before the match begins, the arm wrestlers can make opposed Intimidate checks while the referee, a grubby goblin named Granks, straps their hands (the loser of the check takes a -2 penalty on the first round's Strength check). On Granks's mark, the contest begins. The victor is the first one to slam his or her opponent's hand down, moving it in 30-degree increments. The starting point is 90 degrees from the tabletop.

Each round, the contestants make opposed Strength checks, with the loser's hand moving 30 degrees toward the tabletop. If the higher result exceeds the lower by 10 or more, the loser's hand moves 60 degrees. If the higher result exceeds the lower by 20 or more, the loser's hand moves 90 degrees, which might not be an immediate victory if the loser of this roll won rolls before.

Any PC entering the competition faces the following competitors in turn.

1. Bredoln Laranak: This hulking dwarf is broader in the shoulders than he is tall. Hailing from the Mror Holds, Bredoln (CG male dwarf expert 5, Strength 17, Intimidate +12) finds the wild atmosphere

of Stormreach more to his liking. He is a master of intimidating the opposition with a cold hard stare and a practiced facial twitch. After the match, his stony face immediately softens and he laughs heartily, even buying the PC a drink whether he won or lost.

2. Quinton Debly: An unlikely competitor in the contest, Quinton (CN male gnome fighter 2/adept 4, Strength 20, Intimidate +9) fools most of his opponents because of his short stature. He removes his robe before the match, revealing a heavily muscled frame that puts most humans to shame. His faith in Dol Dorn makes him especially skilled in contests of strength. Before the match, he prays, casting *bull's strength* on himself (included in his Strength score). At the beginning of the second round, he uses his Strength domain granted power to add 4 to his Strength for that round. If Quinton wins, he immediately leaps onto the table, flexing his biceps for the roaring crowd.

3. Goragga: A laborer in Graystone, Goragga (N female ogre barbarian 2, Strength 22, Intimidate +8) is remarkably clever and charismatic for an ogre. She joined the Tharashk workforce out of a desire to see distant lands and enjoys meeting newcomers in taverns. She studies her opponents over the course of an evening; she can rage only once and wants to be sure to save it for her most able challenger. When raging, her Strength increases to 26 for 7 rounds.

DISTRICTS AND WARDS

Like many cities, Stormreach is divided into districts, each with a distinct character, and some of those districts are further divided into wards. Certain nationalities, dragonmarked houses, and business types tend to cluster in the different districts.

Stormreach is a frontier city with a large transient population (several thousand beyond its 11,650 residents). For these travelers, the city is a jumping-off point for exploring the continent's interior or for seeking their fortunes in the city's dungeons. And the city's businesses are happy to cater to them. Although the services might be rough compared to those in other cities, they serve adventurers well.

Some of the districts' citizens are leery of foreigners, fearing they might be the agents of someone or something they fled in Khorvaire, yet most of these citizens are happy to take visitors' money, whether through legitimate or illegitimate means. Many natives fleece their customers for all they can, taking advantage of their lack of knowledge of Stormreach and Xen'drik.

In the following district descriptions, some entries are followed by a skill check, typically Gather Information or Knowledge (local). To take advantage of the information, a character must succeed on the check. This reflects the ability to make necessary contacts. You might know that a merchant sells a certain magic item, but unless you've got a local sponsor—found with Gather Information—the merchant won't sell to you.

CROSS

Population: Mostly immigrants from Breland and Cyre as well as most of the city's orcs and half-orcs.

Character: Crowded with an air of faded glory.

Businesses: Street stalls, cottage industries, and the House Tharashk refinery. 1,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Durgran'Torrn, Kurn d'Velderan, Miraan, and Rusila ir'Clarn.

Cross is all abustle.

The main streets lead to and from the city's other districts, making it a busy place to pass through. Above the streets hang clotheslines and rope bridges between ruins and the places where people have built precariously perched homes.

Conversation flies everywhere, accent and idiom most typically from Cyre and Breland, while street hawkers, selling food, try to sound cosmopolitan, despite the parochial nature of their wares.

With access to five other districts, Cross connects almost as much of the city as the Marketplace does. For most people in Stormreach, Cross is a place you travel through on your way somewhere else, but it is also home to Brelish expatriates and a great number of Cyran refugees.

Much passes through Cross, so its street dealers and children hear about a good number of things, making Cross a good place to get information if you're willing to part with a little coin to get what you need. The people here are often poor, but they are also proud of their heritage.

DANNEL'S PRIDE

A little piece of Cyre survives in Dannel's Pride. Once a small community, the ward is now bursting with refugees. It is a place of Cyran nostalgia and hope, but also a place of anger, regret, and overcrowding.

When Cyre still existed, the ward began as a trading outpost established by Cyran merchants and diplomats. Then came the Last War and the Mourning. Now the original trading outpost is the heart of what the ward's inhabitants call Little Cyre, a shadow of their homeland.

The ward is filled with the poor and the desperate. Many have nothing, yet they do all they can to re-create their lost homeland. The community pays outrageous amounts to purchase Cyran relics, while neglecting everyday needs. Moreover, too many people live in too small a place with too much pride and too many dashed hopes. The shadow of the Day of Mourning fills Dannel's Pride with despair and outrage, and gangs and militias feed on this. The Storm Hammers, led by Miraan, is a visible and growing gang, while Dannel's Wrath builds strength in the shadows and prepares to take bloody vengeance for its fallen country.

Gather Information DC 25: In the refugees' flight from the Mourndland, many Cyran items ended

OVERHEARD IN CROSS

"Hey, Mister, where did you get that axe? Is it magic? Have you ever seen a dragon? Did you kill it? Where are you from? Can you cast spells?"

"Apples! Get your apples! Pickled apples, sweet and tangy. Good for you sailors, and good for a treat! Spiced, pickled apples! A delicacy, green or red, sweet or sour. Get your pickled apples here!"

"Things can happen, things can happen all the time. You can't trust these people or the Guard; they're not like us. We can protect you. We wouldn't stiff a countryman like yourself. All we require is a little donation from time to time, like a tax paying for a city watch. Only we're better than the regular watch. What do you say?"

STORMREACH



Master Key

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Foundry | 13. The Chapterhouse | 25. House Kunderak Enclave |
| 2. House Deneith Enclave | 14. Falconer's Spire | 26. House Lyrandar Shipyard |
| 3. Temple of the Sovereign Host | 15. Lormarch Palace | 27. The Red Ring |
| 4. The Emperor | 16. Molou's Distillery | 28. Tower of Kol Korran |
| 5. Harbormaster's House | 17. Stormreach Recruiters | 29. The Black Freighter |
| 6. The Leaky Dinghy | 18. Von Ruthvek's | 30. The Ship's Cat |
| 7. The Lighthouse | 19. Coldwake Pond | 31. Temple of Vol |
| 8. Shargon's Talon | 20. Delera's Watch | 32. House Phiarlan Enclave |
| 9. The Waterworks | 21. Garden of Respite | 33. Keep of the Silver Flame |
| 10. Wavecrest Tavern | 22. House Jorasco Enclave | 34. Livewood Theater |
| 11. The Bazaar | 23. The Black Wrack | 35. The Onyx Fountain |
| 12. Black Iron | 24. Citadel of the Twelve | 36. Temple Row |



up in Dannel's Pride. No shop specializes in such goods, but a persistent shopper can find them, from magic items to unusual maps. A PC can make a Gather Information check once per week to find out if a particular item, or type of item, is available. Cyrans get a +5 bonus on this check. If something is available, the owner might not want gold for it; sometimes the refugees want things more complicated than coin.

GRAYSTONE

Graystone is the main corridor between the Marketplace and the Harbor district, and the ward is dominated by the House Tharashk refinery at its center. The ward has few residents, its main structures being the refinery and its storehouses and other support buildings, including dormitories for the refinery's human, orc, half-orc, and occasional hill giant workers.

SALTIRE

Saltire has grown into a residential ward for people who do not identify themselves with a nationality or dragon-marked house. They own most of the street stalls in Cross and maintain an unusually quiet neighborhood for such a bustling district. They have nothing to prove, but they are sometimes provoked to protect their own when they fall afoul of gangs and militias from other parts of the city.

THE SLOTHS

The heart of Stormreach's Brelish community, the Sloths is filled with opportunists, along with idealists seeking to establish a bit of Breland in Xen'drik.

Many tailors work in the Sloths, turning out light clothing—such as is favored in Breland—that is better suited to Stormreach's climate than many other styles. Slowly the tailors here are creating a style unique to the city, a style of even lighter fabrics, reinforced for sturdiness, and covering as little as is decent to keep people cool in the humidity.

KEY LOCATIONS

Beehive Pastries

Using honey from beehives in the Rubble Warren (see below), the food stall Beehive Pastries makes miniature cakes, which are so mouthwatering that people actively seek the stand out when they pass through the Sloths. The baker and owner, Sulman (N male human commoner 1), hears a great deal and sees even more, giving him a side trade as an information broker.

Brelish Consulate

For decades, Breland has maintained a consulate in the heart of the Sloths. Its paint peeling and shutters askew, the consulate is a stately building that has seen better days. The current consul is Lady Rusila ir'Clarn. See page 61 for more about Breland's influence in the city.

Havulak Prospecting

A few blocks from the House Tharashk refinery in Graystone, Havulak Prospecting has catered to explorers and prospectors for years. The shop stocks clothing, guidebooks, and tools, and the crotchety proprietor, a human named Havulak, has no end of opinions about the best paths through the jungle. See *Specialized Clothing and Guidebooks*, page 129, for more about the shop's merchandise.

House Tharashk Refinery

A smoky, dangerous, and loud world unto itself, the House Tharashk refinery looms over Graystone. The orc Durgran'Torrn oversees the refinery's workers, who process dragonshards extracted from Xen'drik's interior. From the small Tharashk enclave attached to the refinery, Kurn d'Velderan leads the house's operations in the city: directing Durgran, hiring out inquisitives, and running mining camps beyond the city's borders. See page 68 for more about House Tharashk in the city.

The Rubble Warren

Stone is rarely quarried in Stormreach, instead being recovered from the ruins. Stone blocks are broken up and reused in some places. The Rubble Warren, on Saltire's northern edge, is one. Many street children play in the site, making their own tunnels in the rubble. A few of them are dedicated to becoming explorers and adventurers and are trying to hone their skills. One of these, twelve-year-old Cadroc (NG male human warrior 1), is quite capable for his age and leads a small band of like-minded children. He might fixate on a

PC as an idol; though this behavior could be annoying, Cadroc could be a useful and loyal hireling.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A trader arrives in Stormreach with a Mournland artifact that has some significance to the people of Dannel's Pride. They can't afford it, but in their desperation to get it, they are willing to pay adventurers and lie to them, painting the trader as a thief. The Cyrans try to convince the heroes to board the trader's ship to "recover" the artifact.
- In the Sloths, adventurers stumble into the middle of a standoff between a group of corrupt guards and members of the Storm Hammers (page 73). Both were attempting to mug the same merchant, and now they are fighting over the spoils. Neither has any sympathy for the people of the ward. Will the PCs interfere?
- Cadroc's young "adventurers" have vanished, and their parents are beside themselves with worry. Cadroc has led his group into some tunnels beneath the Rubble Warren because he heard adults complain about the rats down there causing trouble. Something bigger than a rat lurks there, though, more than Cadroc can cope with alone.

FORGELIGHT

Population: Predominantly human, along with most of the city's warforged.

Character: No-nonsense and businesslike.

Businesses: Mercenaries and smiths. 4,000 gp limit (in most places).

Key Personalities: Greigur d'Deneith and Maru Sakhesh.

Forgelight isn't quiet, not at all. The hammering of the smithies, the clash of arms against shields and armor, the roar of the furnaces—these things make the place a tempest of metallic noise.

It isn't quiet, but the people are hushed. The people here don't waste words; they go about their business with a grim and admirable efficiency of language and motion that infects the whole district with seriousness.

Forgelight is the city's most heavily rebuilt and reordere d district, where evidence of the ancient city has to be sought out rather than being obvious. Each time the city has been resettled in past centuries, this district has been a starting point; it has clean water, stable ground, and newer structures.

These days, Forgelight is dominated by House Deneith. The house's numbers are modest, but its employees are numerous. Martial skill is much prized in Stormreach and Xen'drik, so the house's Defenders and Blademarks guilds do a booming business. Even a simple club-swinging can make a tempting wage working in the city or accompanying expeditions into the jungle.

Forgelight's mercenaries fill in for the Stormreach Guard and protect shipments and explorers. Its forges

and shops buy, sell, and repair the equipment used by these mercenaries, as well as by adventurers.

KEY LOCATIONS

Anvilfire Inn

The Anvilfire Inn is the chosen watering hole of Forgelight's laborers. Here they seek some peace and quiet away from "flashy" adventurers and the demands of House Deneith. The laborers work hard, and the innkeeper, Brom Grimbound, will not put up with anyone pestering them in their one refuge.

House Deneith Enclave

The House Deneith enclave is a hilltop keep across the river from the city proper. Forgelight's north side is unprotected by walls, so House Deneith built its keep there, providing protection where there was none.

Only respected clients and dragonmarked heirs are granted entry to the central keep, which can seem empty. Here visitors from the Five Nations can stay, supervise the Blademarks, and negotiate deals away from the rabble on Stormreach's streets. The enclave is headed by the formidable Greigur d'Deneith (page 64), and visitors are met by Bereschel d'Deneith (LN female human aristocrat 1/fighter 2). Her blood calls her to battle and adventure, but her duties to the house keep her acting as a glorified greeter at the enclave. She spends her time talking to mercenary captains, negotiating deals, and acting as a public face for the house. Her irritation with this occasionally slips out as an impolite outburst.

Dragon Tooth Arms

Adventurers and mercenaries need weapons, and this store, the preeminent weapon shop in Forgelight, provides them. Dragon Tooth Arms spends a great deal of coin to ensure that it has a near monopoly on the more powerful magic weapons bought and sold in the city. Weapons with an enhancement bonus of +1 can be purchased here for 10% over the usual price. Any weapon can be sold for 40% of its market price, to a maximum of 10,000 gp.

Knowledge (local) DC 18: With the right connections, adventurers can purchase weapons with an enhancement bonus of +2 or +3. The price is still increased by 10%.

Fare Trades

A general store and pawnshop near Hammersmith's Inn, Fare Trades often makes unfair trades, contrary to its name; exchanges should always be modified in favor of the merchant. The store's saving grace is its proprietor's willingness to trade for almost anything.

The Foundry

Often when people refer to the Foundry, they mean the foundry itself and the many forges that cluster on the streets around it, including the Stormreach Forge. More metal is cast in the Foundry than anywhere else

in the city, and the neighborhood's metalworkers, weaponsmiths, and armorsmiths produce excellent work. The bulk of the goods go to the Stormreach Guard and House Deneith, but the Stormreach Forge also sells weapons to other buyers.

The Foundry is close to a small dock on the river, owned by the Omaren family and heavily used by House Deneith. It allows small ships to dock and load and unload goods. The Foundry requires ore to feed its hunger, and this comes from House Tharashk's mining operations outside the city. A few dockworkers land highly desired jobs unloading ore and ingots. This work is handed out by lottery every time a ship comes in.

Hammersmith's Inn

Hammersmith's Inn is favored by the district's mercenaries, ex-soldiers, and adventurers. Despite being rough and ready, the inn is hospitable and, like the rest of the district, has a sober atmosphere. Veterans of the Last War come here to drink away their sorrows and commiserate with friends, and enemies, made during that conflict.

Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail's claim to fame is its provision for the tastes of warforged, providing blended oils and alchemical fluids that can be felt as pleasurable sensations by them (some warforged are concerned about the long-term effects of consuming these dubious concoctions). The Nail therefore serves a steady stream of warforged and their friends, often adventurers who have spare coin.

Stormreach Forge

Standing in the Foundry's shadow, this is the main outlet for the goods produced in Forgelight. Regular and masterwork arms and armor are always available, though exotic weapons are sometimes hard to get. The Stormreach Forge purchases goods at 40% of list value, to a maximum of 10,000 gp.

Knowledge (local) DC 18: By talking to the right people, adventurers can purchase weapons or armor with a +1 enhancement bonus. Resale value is raised to 50%.

Favored in House DC 20: Members of House Can-nith work with the Stormreach Forge, so an heir of the

house who succeeds on a DC 20 favor check can make arrangements to purchase weapons or armor with a +2 or +3 enhancement bonus. It takes a week to fill such an order.

Temple of the Sovereign Host

The city's oldest temple of the Sovereign Host was founded in Forgelight, before the Temple district was established. Mercenaries often visit the temple to make offerings to Dol Dorn or Dol Arrah. The temple's high priest is Maru Sakhesh. Many visitors are surprised when they see that the temple is dedicated to an unusual variation of the Host, discussed on page 80.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- An independent mercenary company is presenting competition to the Blademarks by undercutting their fees. House Deneith intends to eliminate this rival, an act that could result in open or covert violence. Adventurers could be caught in a brawl between the two groups or hired to help with a strike against one of them.
- A shipment of exotic metal destined for the Foundry has vanished beneath the waves, attacked by sahuagin. A reward is offered for the metal's recovery.
- The tunnels beneath Forgelight are particularly labyrinthine and deep. Regular work is available to those willing to sweep through the tunnels and sunken buildings, clearing out trouble.

THE HARBOR

Population: Humans and half-elves, who are outnumbered by visitors of other races.

Character: Bustling and dangerous.

Businesses: Shipping, crime, taverns, and fishing. 3,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Storm Lord Jonas Wylkes, Berri-gan Enge, Harbormaster Zin, Lord Katanavash, Maeran Mendyrian, Thaera, and Three-Fingered Thad.

It stinks here. All harbors stink, but this—this is something special.

All of Stormreach's great sewers, pipes, and drains lead, ultimately, to the harbor. The effluent doesn't seem to worry the wildlife;

OVERHEARD IN FORGELIGHT

"Up until two years ago, we would have stuck a blade in one another on sight. Now we drink and share stories and laugh and salute fallen comrades on all sides of the Last War. Yet here we are, still fighting things. We can't stop."

"Wizards—phooey! Let me tell you about wizards. Cowards, the lot of 'em! Hidin' behind spells, flouncin' around in their robes like they own the place, actin' like they're better 'n us. I hate wizards, never done an

honest day's work in their lives. All that readin', fillin' their heads with junk. Never trust a man who reads! It ain't natural. Now, buy a veteran a drink, eh?"

"If I point you out, come to the front, and you'll be admitted through the gate to the docks for unloading. If you kick, punch, bite, or throw anything at any of the people being brought through, you'll be escorted to the gates of Forgelight and thrown out. Clear?"

there's plenty of fish on sale for a hungry traveler. You're just not sure that you'd want to eat them.

Away from the chaos and business of the harbor, the city rises uphill and in from the shore. From down here it looks as if toy soldiers have come to life and settled in a ruined city, and above it all stands a great statue, staring out to sea, a beam of light shining up from its outstretched hands.

Like every other part of Stormreach, the Harbor district is built on the bones of the past. The city ever was and ever will be a port, and time and tides have pushed the harbor farther and farther into the city, as neighborhoods have sunk or been washed away.

The harbor is Stormreach's lifeblood, for the city relies on trade and its status as a free port, where rules are lax as long as you have enough coin. Without the harbor, Stormreach would be stranded and quickly die. Aside from taverns and a few shops, most of the district's businesses concentrate on loading and unloading vessels and storing cargo.

For the visitor, the Harbor district is a cold plunge into Stormreach. The city's corruption, competing powers, and ancient mysteries all have examples here. Some travelers disembark and then book passage back to Khorvaire as quickly as they can. Some never leave, thrilled at the city's liveliness and danger, while some disappear—until fishers pull their bodies from the harbor.

KEY LOCATIONS

Crypt of the Guard

The Crypt of the Guard was built a hundred years ago to honor the dead of the Stormreach Guard. This turned out to be a backhanded compliment; traitors were buried alongside heroes, and the crypt was built too close to the water.

Lack of upkeep and regular water damage make the crypt an unpleasant place to visit, and it has been raided by Emerald Claw necromancers in need of undead muscle. Guards today try to save enough money to be buried elsewhere, so the crypt has become the pauper's option.

Dagoward's Apothecary

If you're after healing potions, antitoxin, or a healer's kit in the Harbor district, you have one option: Dagoward's Apothecary. Some say Nalia Dagoward (CN female human adept 5; Heal +10) has used underhanded methods to run competitors out of the district.

Nalia's prices are low, but you get what you pay for. She has 2d4 *potions of cure light wounds* and 1d4 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and her prices are 10% below list. But there is a 10% chance that a potion will be half strength. She has enough beds for three people to get bed rest, at 1 gp per night.

The Emperor

On the cliffs above the harbor stands a great statue, palms together and with a great beam of light rising from its outstretched hands. Scholars believe this is a statue of Emperor Cul'sir from the Age of Giants. Although the general populace has no idea who Cul'sir was, everyone refers to the statue as the Emperor. It radiates an overwhelming magical aura, and despite many wizards' efforts to discern its purpose, it remains a mystery.

Hammer and Chain

Across the square from the Riedran consulate, the Hammer and Chain is a capable armor and weapon shop. Locals go to Three-Fingered Thad for cheap repairs and reclaimed goods, but the Hammer and Chain provides more upscale services, including masterwork armor and weapons.

Harbormaster's House

Harbormaster Zin oversees the day-to-day minutiae of running the harbor for the Harbor Lord. Everything that is beneath the lord's notice is run through Zin, a middle-aged and overworked halfling.

Zin's house is large and is partly a public building, where captains pay their dues, get charts, or make arrangements for their cargo. The house commands a good view of the harbor, allowing the harbormaster to keep an eye on the docks.

Leaky Dinghy

The Leaky Dinghy is a rotting, rat-infested, creaking mess of a tavern in the area of the docks called Fisher's Folly, an unsafe mishmash of rigging, fishing boats, and huts that is home to many of the city's fishers.

A hangout for sailors, fishers, and thrill seekers, the Dinghy persists only because of the love its patrons have for the place, keeping it alive despite the best efforts of storm and rot to destroy it. The tavern's survival against storms has become an occasion for celebrations, with parties being held in the swaying structure during the severest storms.

OVERHEARD IN THE HARBOR

"Hello, sailor. Fresh off the boat, are you? Why not come with me and spend some of that hard-earned coin? You look like you need a rest, and I know just the place, right down this alley . . ."

"You so much as look at Aida again, and the next time we take you for a little dip in the harbor, you'll be wearing iron shackles chained to a rock. Are we clear? Good lad."



Berrigan Enge accepts a tax payment from a local assassin

Sahuagin come to the Dinghy looking to be hired as guides for ships crossing the Thunder Sea, and the tavern offers dishes specifically for these sea devils. Adventurous members of other races, and the extremely drunk, sometimes give this food a try, but the raw and wriggling nature of the meals leads to very distressed stomachs.

Lighthouse

On a small rocky island in the harbor stands Stormreach's lighthouse, another remnant of ancient giant architecture and magic. Believed to be almost as old as the Emperor, the lighthouse's gleaming crystal slowly turns, casting its light out to sea and then across the city.

Strangely, the lighthouse building does not contain any rooms or stairs, being made of solid stone, except for the ground floor and cellars. These chambers have been claimed by Eldamir Fallowcrest, who maintains them as his private haven and library. He is paranoid in his defense of his books, and though he allows visitors to examine them one at a time, he hovers over their shoulder. At the first sign of trouble, he locks down the library and activates traps to secure his collection.

Riedran Consulate

A short walk from the Wavecrest Tavern, the Riedran consulate is home to the Inspired consul, Lord Katanavash, and his staff. See page 62 for more information.

Shargon's Talon

The city's temple to the Devourer, Shargon's Talon is a stone tower jutting from the harbor. Two priests preside over its rituals: an elf and a sahuagin. See *The Cult of the Devourer*, page 82, for more information.

Thaendyr's Rest

Combining the functions of consulate, inn, and temple, Thaendyr's Rest is the city's little piece of Aerenal. Located near the wall between the Harbor district and the Graystone ward, the Rest caters to Aereni and their companions and is run by the elf Thaera. Maeran Mendyrian is the resident Undying Court priest and de facto consul. See page 61 for more information.

Underharbor

Sloping out beneath the waves of the harbor lie just as many ancient ruins as in the city proper. Obscured by seaweed and covered in mussels and barnacles, these ruined arches and buildings provide homes for sahuagin and other creatures of the deep. This makes many citizens nervous and leads the dragonmarked houses and the Stormreach Guard to keep a wary eye on the harbor.

Waterworks

Looming over the mouth of the Koronoo River that flows into the harbor, the Waterworks are a mix of ancient sewerage and more recent pipes, the largest

HARBOR DISTRICT CHARACTERS

Aida (NG female human commoner 2): Aida works in the Wavecrest Tavern. Sweet and lovely, she is considered too good for the place. Many of its patrons, who are otherwise gruff, make it their job to look out for her. Aida seems destined for better things but is content to remain at the Wavecrest providing a friendly face for new arrivals to the city. Gods help anyone who oversteps the line with her in front of the inn's regulars!

Baudry Cartamon (CN male human expert 3/rogue 2): A greasy, fat scoundrel of a man, Baudry Cartamon likes to fancy himself an underworld kingpin, but he is nothing of the sort. A dishonest merchant, an amateur smuggler, and an inexperienced thief, Baudry has delusions of grandeur and can often be found with kindred spirits in the Wayward Lobster. Every feud with another petty criminal he believes to be a vendetta, every deal he makes is a matter of life and death. Some get taken in by his act, and he has a gang of similarly egotistical thugs, as well as the ear of a few new arrivals who believe his nonsense. So far the Bilge Rats have let him live, most likely as a source of amusement.

Berrigan Enge (LN male half-elf aristocrat 2/expert 2): A distant cousin of the Wylkes family, Berrigan Enge has secured a profitable position aiding the Harbor Lord in dealing with duty on goods making their way from the harbor to market—a position that affords him many opportunities to skim some coin for himself. Berrigan takes a very hands-on approach to his job, preferring to hire help only on rare occasions. He is often seen at the Harbormaster's house.

Capshaw the Crier (CG male halfling commoner 2/bard 2): Capshaw the Crier is engaged in an endless—and largely ignored—struggle on behalf of Stormreach's poor people. From his shack near the Leaky Dinghy, Capshaw has long tried to undermine the power of the Storm Lords and the dragonmarked houses, through propaganda leaflets and less-than-flattering tales told by his self-appointed town criers. As more visitors listen to them, Capshaw might lose his status as a mere nuisance and become a serious concern to the city's powers. He and his criers might soon be in for trouble, something a "champion of the people" like Capshaw would welcome.

Gimcrack the Sly (N male human expert 1/rogue 1): Gimcrack thought to make a small fortune smuggling luxuries into Stormreach from Khorvaire for

the expatriates in the city. It was a sound plan, but he fell afoul of Berrigan Enge. By the time Berrigan was done taxing him, he didn't have enough gold left to buy passage home, let alone to invest in exotic items to take back to double his money. All but destitute and reduced to working on the docks, Gimcrack drowns his sorrows in the Wavecrest Tavern and dreams of working for, and joining, the Storm Lords.

Lord Gerald Goodblade (CN male human rogue 2): "Lord" Gerald Goodblade is nothing of the sort; his title is the result of his skill at lying about himself. When visitors first arrive in Stormreach, Gerald's "good name" is likely to be one of the first things they hear about, thanks to his practice of paying off street urchins, beggars, and other poor people to talk him up to new arrivals. He makes his living fleecing newcomers, selling stolen goods, and sponsoring minor acts of theft and grave robbing. His latest scam involves some nice-looking but poorly made swords, which he tries to pass off as magical. He offers them as a reward to those willing to do some of his "little tasks."

Tattered Alice (N female human commoner 1): Tattered Alice lingers in Fisher's Folly, near the Leaky Dinghy, living on scraps and the odd coin from a sympathetic passerby. Tearing at her clothes with her nails, she shouts dire warnings and prophecies. Awakened dark gods, plagues of sea devils, a conspiracy by the Storm Lords to poison the water supply—these and other dark portents have passed her lips.

Tattered Alice is unusual for a prophet; so far as anyone has been able to tell, not one of her dire predictions has come to pass. Strangely, the district's fisherfolk take this to be a mark of divinity, that she somehow prevents these terrible futures. Some come to see her simply to be reassured that none of these dire things will happen.

Three-Fingered Thad (N male dwarf expert 3): Three-Fingered Thad can be found throughout the city but most often in the Harbor district, where his somewhat clumsy smithing skills and crude but serviceable weapons and armor are appreciated for their inexpensiveness. He sells reclaimed and repaired arms and armor from a stall, as well as doing a little tinker work. He seems to lose fingers with distressing frequency, leading to bets in the more disreputable taverns about when he will lop off another one.

of which dumps effluent into the harbor. Behind the pipes and steam vents stand sealed iron doors, which lead into the kobold-infested sewers.

The giants built everything big, and the vaulted sewer system is no exception. As one travels deeper and deeper into it, it gets older and, eventually, ties into the buried buildings of the old city. The deepest tunnels are home to things more dangerous, and more disturbing, than kobolds.

Wavecrest Tavern

Despite no longer being at sea, Sigmund Bauerson runs a tight ship at the Wavecrest Tavern. The Wavecrest is, unusually for the area, a drinking hole of good repute and some class, despite being a little rough around the edges. The inn hosts a popular arm wrestling tournament each week (see page 27).

The Wavecrest was built atop caves beneath the current waterline, and someone listening at the floorboards can hear the water surging beneath. A short while ago, a cave-in cut off the inn's cellar from these caves, but it is only a matter of time before subsidence opens them up again.

Wayward Lobster

On the south side of the Koronoo River, not far from the Waterworks, the Wayward Lobster is a carousing place for those who fancy themselves scoundrels. The tavern's clientele—pickpockets, smugglers, burglars, and people who plan crime but never commit it—is afflicted with delusions of grandeur. Under the influence of gin, they devise elaborate schemes, only to forget them the next morning. Still, a few actual crimes have been hatched in the tavern.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Baudry Cartamon is onto the scam of the century. While he was drunk in the Wayward Lobster one night, he is sure he overheard some smugglers whispering about sneaking out of the city with some rare artifacts gathered from the jungle. What if those artifacts were intercepted? Baudry remembers the warehouse the smugglers mentioned. Now he just needs some muscle to collect the goods.
- Someone has done something to deeply upset the sahuagin, who are making dangerous noises about “the return of that which was taken.” Only they seem reluctant to mention what that thing is, due to religious taboo. Until the dispute is sorted out, ships dare not leave or enter the harbor. And sahuagin are seen at night, stalking Stormreach's streets. A bounty on the thing in question is set by the Storm Lords as they prepare for the worst.
- The Waterworks have ceased working. Only a trickle comes out of the main drainage pipe, and the sewers in the rest of the city are backed up. As unglamorous as it might seem, the sewers need exploring, and something down there is hungry.

THE MARKETPLACE

Population: Mostly humans and dwarves.

Character: Lively, industrious, and thriving.

Businesses: Buying and selling almost anything. 6,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Calynden d’Lyrandar, the Storm Lords, and Valexa Von Ruthvek.

Here broken arches and fallen columns are covered with awnings and surrounded by market stalls. The twisting, improvised streets are crammed with people, most of them visitors, making their way through the city and stopped at every turn by hawkers trying to sell them one thing or another.

Three great buildings loom over everything in this quarter: Falconer’s Spire, with airships docked against it; the bazaar, a gigantic tent sheltering the city’s great open-air market; and the Lorsmarch Palace, center of the Storm Lords’ power.

This is the heart of the city. Here all the city’s struggles, opportunities, and dangers are gathered and intensified. You can feel it in the air, and soon something is going to change.

The Marketplace is the natural center of this city sustained by legitimate and illegitimate trade. The Lorsmarch Palace, the seat of the Storm Lords’ collective power, is here, near the shops and stalls that are the foundation of the city’s economy. The district has always been the city’s most defensible, and the older parts of the palace date back to the age of the pirate kings.

Centuries ago, the Marketplace was not the center of the city. Coastal erosion has shifted the center to this point, which appears to have been a temple district in the Age of Giants. Remnants of those days are abundant: carved stone heads, a circle of visions, towering pillars, and ancient tunnels that have been turned into basements for many of the district’s buildings.

For adventurers, the Marketplace is the best place to resupply or to sell whatever goods they have discovered in the continent’s interior. Although goods can be expensive here, the Marketplace is the only place to buy or sell many things.

KEY LOCATIONS

The Bazaar

Patched and re-dyed again and again, the gigantic red tent that covers Stormreach’s bazaar dominates the Marketplace and can be seen from almost every part of it. Inside is a mess of walkways, smaller tents, and market stalls, all lent a reddish glow when sunlight shines through the tent overhead.

Here the traders would sell their own mothers for a handful of coins and compete enthusiastically with one another for customers. Only the most wily vendors last in the bazaar, so while the merchandise is good quality, buyers can expect to pay more than usual and are sometimes fleeced.

Black Iron

This smithy is run by a family of half-giants. It buys and sells goods designed for both Large and Huge creatures and often trades with the giants of the Tents of Rushemé. In addition to selling excellent goods, the smiths are happy to prepare people to deal with the Rushemé giants.

Black Iron is run by the smith Hular (N male half-giant mageswright 6/commoner 6), one of the best in the city. He can produce armor and weapons with an enhancement bonus of up to +2. He runs the smithy efficiently, but age is taking its toll. He is preparing his children to take over the business, but his youngest daughter, Solarca (CG female half-giant fighter 4/psychic warrior 2), is eager to live a more adventure-filled life. She might seek to join a group investigating the ruins of the giants,

or strike out on her own in a quest to steal a husband from the half-giants of Dar Qat (SX20). If her ambitions lack an outlet, she might turn to the Titans (page 73).

The Chapterhouse

A joint venture between House Ghallanda and House Phiarlan, the Chapterhouse serves as a tavern, hostel, and performance space. Run by Sorala d'Ghallandar, it provides inexpensive accommodations (10% off standard prices) at a variety of comfort levels and excellent entertainment. The hostel almost always has rooms available, the only drawback being that, if you stay at the Chapterhouse, you can be certain someone knows exactly where you are.

Gather Information DC 15: The Chapterhouse is a wonderful place to find information. On a successful

DENIZENS OF THE BAZAAR

Everyone's selling something in the bazaar. If the PCs want to browse some random stalls and tents, roll 1d10 and consult the following:

1. The blind half-orc crone at this stall sells statuettes of her clients' faces. She feels their faces with her weathered hands and then carves amazing likenesses of them in soapstone or wood. Each statuette costs 1 gp and takes the crone about 1 hour of work.

2. Roars, neighs, and squawks emerge from this expansive pavilion. The only House Vadalis business in the city, Tooth and Nail sells creatures from the continent's interior. Inside the tent, cages and pens hold potential mounts and guardian beasts, as well as exotic pets. Members of the Handlers Guild keep the creatures from biting each other and the house's customers.

3. The gnome Hanruli sells tapestries at this stall. Uncannily, her tapestries all feature images of the PCs in horrific circumstances. One shows a black tower by a stormy sea, with one of the PCs impaled on the iron fence below the tower. The second shows a PC being ripped to pieces by the many maws of a hydra in a swamp. The third shows a PC as a vampire feeding on a family member or friend, while a shadow-obscured figure looks on in the background. The last shows a PC in a loving embrace with a beautiful male or female, who clutches a curved dagger poised to stab the PC in the back. Hanruli claims that her inspiration comes from her dreams, and she is just as disturbed by the PCs' resemblance to her models as they are.

4. The portly goblin who runs this booth sells spices from across Eberron. Fernian firepeppers (SX 54) and many other exotic flavorings are available for purchase. He also cooks up plates of squid with his spices and sells them for 5 cp to 2 sp, depending on the spices used. His six children, each more homely than the last, help him cook, and he tries to pawn them off

on prospective mates ("He cooks good!" or "She'll take care of you!"). The squid is delicious.

5. A halfling peddler named Ilgargo Reddlin offers beautiful stones and shells polished by the sea. He is a simple man and collects pieces for their color; one of his treasures might be an undervalued *ioun stone* or a piece of ancient rubble that holds a terrible curse.

6. A beautiful gnome named Ridara runs this fragrant stall, where she sells all manner of candles and incense. Everything from sandalwood incense sticks to candles that burn with multicolored flames line her tables. She has a limited supply of *incense of meditation* and one *candle of invocation* (chaotic good).

7. The elf Garay Gyriaz runs Garay's Games, a small wooden shop offering the finest in games, including Conqueror, Dragonhunt, Engagement, and Three-Dragon Ante. Specialty versions of the games—carved from livewood, obsidian, or silver—are available for wealthy gaming enthusiasts.

8. A famous designer from Sharn, the gnome Tyzian Davandi runs Far Davandi, which sells glameweave outfits. The outfits cost between 105 and 300 gp.

9. A human boy is selling strips of bloodstained cloth. He collects the blood of criminals killed in public executions. Apparently, there is a market for these grisly trophies. The boy charges between 1 sp and 1 gp, based on the amount of blood and the notoriety of the criminal.

10. Forgotten Places offers a wide variety of bizarre maps. A map of the Thunder Sea's floor costs 20 gp; a Sharn "star map" pointing out the residences of Last War heroes and famous performers, 30 gp; a map supposedly leading to a lost city in the jungle, 100 gp; and a dubious map of the Churning Chaos of Kythri, 200 gp.

check, a PC might learn about a recent jungle expedition, a piece of gossip about a Storm Lord, a ship with a mysterious cargo, or some other bit of interesting news.

Falconer's Spire

Falconer's Spire rises high above the Marketplace, even taller than the Lorsmarch Palace and the great tent that covers the bazaar. A great blue-inlaid edifice, the spire acts as a docking station for airships and as the enclave for House Lyrandar, overseen by Calynden d'Lyrandar (page 66).

Lorsmarch Palace

One of the largest buildings in the city, the Lorsmarch Palace—also called the Throne of Storms—is the Storm Lords' seat of power. Diplomats and other high-profile visitors meet with the lords here, and their magistrates administer justice within the palace's chambers. Public executions are held in the square at the base of the palace steps, one of the few places in the city where members of the Stormreach Guard can always be found. The Storm Lords are said to keep much of their wealth in vaults beneath the palace, instead of trusting it to House Kundarak. If these vaults exist, they must be heavily guarded.

Molou's Distillery

Molou's Distillery produces most of the kuryeva drunk in Stormreach and across southern Khorvaire. Kuryeva is a potent gin made from the berries of Xen'drik's kuryeva bush (SX23). Recently the distillery has started selling sooka, a form of kuryeva with a touch of dream-lily. This concoction is even more calming and addictive than kuryeva, making it the ruination of those not blessed with a strong will.

The distillery has a taproom where the dedicated drinker can get kuryeva straight from the tap. Storm Lord Varen Lassite often throws parties at the distillery, and the taproom is the center of these wild storms.

Old Catacombs

Near the wall shared with Dannel's Pride, the Old Catacombs were once used as a sanctuary and prison by

servants of the Silver Flame. Long before humans came to Stormreach, this fallen tower was built by giants. Parts of it project above the street, but most of the old building is buried. Five years ago, the catacombs were overrun by undead. Many of them were destroyed, but enough remained that the lower levels were sealed with wards and stone to contain the evil, and the upper levels were abandoned. Secrets remain in the catacombs for those prepared to brave the darkness.

Phoenix Tavern

A half-subterranean drinking hole, the Phoenix Tavern is built into the district wall southwest of the Lorsmarch Palace. The tavern is favored by criminals and dissidents and is stuffy year-round. A group of minstrels performs weekly here, and many of the tavern's regulars sing along.

Steam Tunnels

Steam tunnels run under much of the city and have vents and pipes that are especially visible in the Marketplace, where they emerge from the ground in alleys and run alongside buildings before descending back into the earth. The workings of the tunnels and pipes are a mystery to all, despite many expeditions to try to understand them.

Stormreach Recruiters

Characters handy with a sword and willing to follow the Storm Lords' orders without question can easily find a place in the Stormreach Guard. The pay is 3 sp per day (6 sp for officers); many guards supplement their income by accepting bribes. Anyone who joins the Guard and completes the three-month training has all past crimes wiped away; most change their names to reflect this new beginning. The Storm Lords have extradited criminals before, but they stand by the Stormreach Guard. As long as guards serve the lords faithfully, they can leave their pasts behind.

Von Ruthvek's Splendors of the South

The best-known antiquities dealer in Stormreach, Valexa Von Ruthvek (N female gnome magewright

MARKETPLACE CHARACTERS

Nat Gann (CN male human expert 2/rogue 2): Nat Gann can be found in the bazaar performing acrobatic tricks with a pole to earn some coin from amused passersby. Nat makes considerably more money as an information hunter for inquisitives and various powers in the city. Few spots in the rigging and ruins of Stormreach are beyond Nat's agility and cleverness to reach. Because he has worked for both sides in various conflicts, he's bound to offend someone sooner or later.

Yannick Drumdoom (NE male dwarf expert 1/adept 2): His wild eyes peering out from his tangled hair and beard, Yannick Drumdoom lingers near the Old Catacombs. Smeared with ashes, Yannick has devoted himself to the Keeper, god of death, and beats his drum day and night, reciting the names of the dead and collecting tokens from tombs to keep their spirits closer to this world. He is clearly insane and makes passersby uncomfortable.

8/lore master 5) is an expert on the city's past and its surroundings. Her shop is like a museum, with a wide array of magic items and other curiosities. She sponsors occasional expeditions into the continent's interior and has begun to receive funding from a group of anonymous benefactors, whom she only knows through intermediaries. The one condition put on the funds is that each expedition must go deeper into the wilds than the ones before it.

Valexa has a somewhat random selection of magic items in stock, with values of up to 8,000 gp. She casts *identify* for 125 gp. She typically purchases magic items for half their given value.

Diplomacy DC 30: Valexa's favored clients gain access to special services. She sells magic items with a value of up to 12,000 gp and casts *remove curse* or *divination* for 500 gp.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Valexa Von Ruthvek is sponsoring an expedition deep into Xen'drik in an attempt to find an artifact called the *Vessel of the Infinite Sea*. Von Ruthvek's mysterious benefactors do not want the artifact returned to her, fearing she might divine their purpose from it. They have dispatched agents to steal the item from the adventurers once they have recovered it.
- Hular wants his daughter to get "this adventuring nonsense" out of her system, so he has set aside some money to hire adventurers to take her out on an adventure, bribing them to make it difficult and unpleasant in the hope that it will put her off adventuring for life.
- While exploring the bazaar, the adventurers witness a potion vendor's stall burst into flames. The fire will spread rapidly unless someone stops it!

OLDGATE

Population: A mix of races, mostly of Aundairian and Thrane descent.

Character: Orderly but sly.

Businesses: Food markets, magewrights, small-scale agriculture. 1,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Jorian Thiel, Surrinek, and Valen Vanatar.

You'd heard that Oldgate was one of the oldest and most significant parts of the city, but passing through it doesn't give you that impression. Oldgate seems too ordered and polite, too clean and safe. Contrary to its name, this area feels newer than the rest of the city, and the people seem as if they're in a city of their own, far from the chaos in the neighboring districts.

Compared to the rest of the city, Oldgate is in good order, with rubble cleaned up and many buildings sporting new coats of paint. In the Age of Giants, the district housed the city's main inland gate, the ruins of which loom over the westernmost part of the district.

In recent decades, Oldgate has become the home of expatriate communities from Aundair and Thrane and is considered a model district by the Storm Lords. However, under its respectable face, the district contains intrigues between its militias—the Knights of Thrane and the Ninth Wands—and other power groups in the city.

EMBERS

Embers is the center of the Thrane presence in Stormreach. Its residents keep to themselves for the most part, united by their faith and by a desire to make their home a refuge from the wildness in so much of the city. Even the Thrane dissidents here retain much of their national pride and dedicate themselves to the neighborhood's welfare. If anyone tries to cause trouble in the ward, the Knights of Thrane, led by Valen Vanatar (page 75), do not stand for it.

WHITEWASH

Whitewash is home to Aundairian expatriates, who have a reputation for aloofness and one-upmanship. They certainly do take pride in their ward. Over the centuries, a considerable amount of magic has been woven into it. More *everbright lanterns* flicker here than anywhere else in the city, and the district takes its name from a centrally located magic fountain that allows people to instantly clean clothes there. A team of magewrights use *prestidigitation* to keep the district itself clean. The Aundairians are largely peaceful, but if pressed, they will not hesitate to call on Jorian Thiel and the Ninth Wands (page 76).

OVERHEARD IN THE MARKETPLACE

"Dastard! Just another cup, one more cup of kuryeva. That isn't going to bankrupt you; you've got vats of the stuff! You can spare me one cup, can't you? Hey, mister, spare an old salt a few coins to buy a drink?"

"I don't know how the darned things work or what they're for. All I know—all I care about—is that the bloody pipe has started blowing steam through my

house. Everything's wet and hot, and the wood's warping. I want to know what the Guard, what the Storm Lords, are going to do about it!"

"Thief! Stop her! She's got my coin purse! Grab her! Don't let her get away! Oh wait . . . no, here it is. My mistake. I do apologize—wait, it's empty! Somebody stop her! She's got my money!"

KEY LOCATIONS

Surrinek Riverboats

Surrinek (N female shifter expert 3) has a near monopoly on the river taxi business, which extends down the Koronoo River to the harbor. She allows the riverboat captains who work under her to operate almost autonomously, as long as they divide the available customers equitably. The captains' boats range from gondolas to barges. Surrinek runs the business from a stilted hut over the river. Boats can be tied up at its base and are left there when they need repair.

The ablest captain on the city's waterways, Surrinek grew up in Stormreach and knows the river and harbor like the back of her hand. She is a source of information if she can be persuaded to part with it; flattery is as much a weakness for her as coin.

The Candlelight

The Thrane-dominated Embers ward is short on places to drink, but it has plenty of places to eat. The Candlelight is one of the best, specializing in Thrane desserts. It has private rooms for customers who have a little spare coin and a desire to discuss things away from curious ears. These rooms are often used by Thranes harboring secrets, either shameful deeds from the Last War or heretical beliefs they feel they cannot share with their neighbors.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Something is hiding in the Koronoo River and has been attacking Surrinek's captains and their passengers. River travel has come to a standstill when the sun is not in the sky, inconveniencing passengers and cutting into Surrinek's profits. The captains have promised free river travel and some gold to anyone who can get to the bottom of the mystery, which the Stormreach Guard is brushing off as bad luck and superstition.
- A saboteur has corrupted the magic of the White-wash well, and it now spews out stinking filth instead of cleansing water. Although most of Stormreach regards this event as comeuppance for the Aundairians' arrogance, the ward's residents are not amused and will pay good coin to have the culprit found. The Ninth Wands have had no luck so far.

- Back in Thrane, one of the cardinals in Flamekeep is convinced that the heresies of Stormreach are greater than anyone suspects. He is looking for people to infiltrate some of the private societies at the Candlelight to gain the proof needed to convince the Keeper to restore order in this far-flung place.

RESPITE

Population: Humans mixed with halflings and some other races.

Character: Unhurried and beautiful.

Businesses: Healing, funerary services, various shops. 6,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Alhaura d'Jorasco and Iriakan d'Jorasco.

As you pass beneath the great arch, covered in flowering creepers, and enter Respite, you are surrounded by the sweet scent of blooming flowers.

Here the ruins, plant life, and new buildings seem harmonious, one flowing into the next. Even the floating rubble—fragments of long-forgotten majesties—play their part, covered in blooming plants and small trees.

Because of its many majestic ruins and large amount of floating rubble, sages believe Respite was the wealthiest part of the ancient city. They know it was later the seat of power for giant chieftains and pirate lords. These past glories now exist only as monuments and graveyards: the tombs of pirate captains, the mausoleums of giants, the wreckage of old thrones. Today the district is devoted to healing and funerary rites.

For adventurers and explorers, Respite is a place where they can recover their strength and equip themselves, and the ancient tombs beckon, elaborately warded but rich with treasure. Sometimes subsidence destroys one tomb but reveals another, and old dangers emerge into the realm of the living.

STORMHAVEN

The Stormhaven ward is the city's wealthiest. Most of the Storm Lords maintain houses here, whether small retreats or mansions. The ward is surrounded by walls covered by flowering creepers and is almost a miniature city, with its own shops and a group of the Stormreach

OVERHEARD IN OLDGATE

"All I'm saying is the Karrns are living around that temple of Vol day in and day out, and I've yet to see them come to any harm. I mean, sure, they're a scowling bunch, but they haven't all been devoured by demons or raised as the walking dead either, have they?"

"Five copper will get you most places, and much faster than you can walk through those streets at this time of

day. That's five copper for all of you. What do you say? Hop aboard."

"It's too clean here—everything gleaming like it was new. This is a city of ruins, and they've completely spoiled the atmosphere by scrubbing the grime off the stones. How are you supposed to appreciate how ancient this place is if moss and lichen isn't on everything?"

Guard assigned to patrol its streets day and night. These guards keep their eyes on “riffraff” from other parts of the city and run them out at the first sign of trouble.

KEY LOCATIONS

Coldwake Pond

Coldwake Pond is a deep body of water near the great gate that leads into Stormhaven. The pond—a cistern in centuries past—is much colder than other bodies of water in and around the city. Every day mist rises from the pond as warm, damp air meets its iciness. Speculation is rife about what causes the pond to be so cold.

Delera’s Watch

There are more dead than living in Respite, and their necropolis is Delera’s Watch. Named after the tomb of Delera Omaren, one of the city’s founders, the necropolis is the resting place for Storm Lords, pirate captains, and wealthy explorers. The pirate tombs are filled with traps and wards, and undead guardians are prepared to stop robbers from frustrating the dead pirates’ attempts to take their wealth and treasure maps with them.

As a burial site, this land is very old. The necropolis’s hillocks are all burial mounds from the Age of Giants, and below the surface lie sepulchers and bone-filled pits. Despite constant efforts to stop them, undead often rise from these dark places, and stories abound of catacombs where mummified corpses have lain undisturbed for more than forty thousand years.

Using the land around Delera’s Watch as a makeshift graveyard, generations of poorer citizens have, depending on their cultures, buried their dead in simple graves or left corpses out for scavengers to devour. This hodgepodge of grave markers and bone piles is like a moat around the stately tombs and sarcophagi of Delera’s Watch itself.

Drowning Sorrows Tavern

Not far from the Garden of Respite, the Drowning Sorrows Tavern is a good place to go to heal the wounds of the heart. The drink is cheap, the company is friendly, and the tavern is airy. The proprietress, Bula O’Loarima, provides a shoulder to cry on and a



Respite provides a place to relax

listening ear, following the tradition laid down by her predecessor, Camellia Khan, who was famous for being able to get people to spill their troubles within moments of meeting her.

Empty Handed

Troy Alzander does his best to make sure that nobody leaves his store without buying something; he believes

OVERHEARD IN RESPITE

“Sure, it seems nice here with all the flowers and the pretty ruins. Trust me, though, wherever there are rich folks there’s power, and power means there’s something ugly going on. The prettiest toadstools and insects are also the most poisonous.”

“I’m here every morning for a dip. Coldwake is the only place in all of Stormreach where the air is actually

fresh and crisp. I take a dip in there every single day, without fail. It keeps me tough, healthy, and strong.”

“Respite is the only decent part of this benighted city. This, my dear fellow, is civilization and decency. Everywhere else in Stormreach is barbarism or excessive patriotism, and beyond the walls are only animals. I never leave Respite if I don’t have to.”

it is bad luck if they leave empty handed. The store has various tools, artworks, and knickknacks. If someone is about to leave without buying anything, Troy tries to sell a 1 cp trinket as a last resort.

Knowledge (local) DC 20: Troy has a small supply of minor wondrous items—typically *Quaal's feather tokens*—that he will sell if a person knows to ask.

Feather's Fall Apothecary

Ostensibly this is an apothecary, run by Salar and Quolish, a pair of ambitious halflings whose moneymaking schemes often fall flat. The apothecary is their only real success, but it also acts as a store for whatever remains after their latest get-rich-quick plan has foundered. They have a wide selection of potions duplicating the effects of spells of 2nd level and lower.

Diplomacy DC 30: The duo keeps a handful of potions holding 3rd-level spells. These are reserved for customers who make a good impression on them. A customer who has participated in one of their schemes must succeed on a DC 20 Diplomacy check, rather than DC 30.

Garden of Respite

The Garden of Respite is a multitiered garden maintained by the Healers Guild. A sanctuary from the city's clamor, the fragrant garden is a favorite place for quiet walks and romantic rendezvous.

Each of the garden's three tiers is home to a different type of plant. The top tier, which sees the most sun, is used for flowering plants from Xen'drik and other continents. The second tier is used for plants that require less light and less heat than those in the top tier. This means plants and trees from more temperate parts of the world. The third and lowest tier harbors winter plants and mushrooms. This is the least-visited part of the garden, where garden tools are stored in stone sheds that were once tombs, which are rumored to connect with the undercity.

House Jorasco Enclave

An ancient building renovated in recent decades, the House Jorasco enclave is built on the district's highest point, looking down the slope toward the gate that leads into Dannel's Pride. The building is filled with plants and flowers, perfuming the air and giving the rooms a feeling of life. At night, the enclave's windows glow with a soft blue light cast by everbright lanterns.

The enclave's main healer is a cleric of Olladra, Alhaura d'Jorasco (LN female halfling cleric 9). In addition to her ability to cast *raise dead*, the house possesses an *altar of resurrection* (ECS 261) for use on behalf of favored clients. However, strange events sometimes accompany the use of powerful necromancy in Stormreach. In a handful of cases, foreign spirits have seized the bodies of those being raised. When Jorasco sought to resurrect the Storm Lord Delera Omaren, the risen warrior cried out in the tongue of the giants and killed dozens

with lightning before she was returned to the grave. Another time, a pack of marut inevitables appeared after a member of the Wayfinder Foundation (page 130) was raised. The outsiders slew the adventurer and devastated the enclave before vanishing. Today, Jorasco healers use *augury* before performing major necromancy. But divinations can fail, and at the DM's discretion, resurrection might bring surprises. Alhaura is eager to find an answer to this mystery and will sponsor any expedition that promises to solve it.

Beside Alhaura, the enclave maintains a staff of lower-level adepts and experts, who can cast healing spells and provide long-term care in the enclave's bed-rest wing. Healing potions are also for sale, though supplies sometimes run low because of demand from the Stormreach Guard and other major clients.

The enclave is managed by Iriakan d'Jorasco (NG male halfling barbarian 1/expert 6). A recent immigrant from the Talenta Plains, Iriakan is eager to improve the house's influence throughout Stormreach and offers bargains to adventurers who help him with this goal.

House of Wizardry

A few doors down from Empty Handed, this magic shop is crowded, filled with gnomes and halflings offering spellcasting services and magic items to the highest bidder. Every nook and cranny hosts a mage-wright or minor wizard. More an indoor market than a shop, the sellers often find themselves competing with one another. The selection of spells available on any given day is up to the DM, but can include wizard spells of 2nd level or lower or magewright spells of 3rd level or lower.

Diplomacy DC 30: A skillful negotiator can often play the competitors against one another, resulting in a 10% price reduction.

Open Palm Inn

Haddie Malewud likes to keep her inn a restful place, and the Open Palm, next door to the House Jorasco enclave, is first and foremost a place to stay. The inn's ale is some of the worst around, but the food and beds are among the best in Stormreach. Haddie loves mothering her guests, something that even the most embittered like, even if they refuse to admit it.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Respite's undead problem seems endless; when one undead creature is destroyed, another rises within days. In newer tombs, traps and wards are as much to keep the undead within as they are to keep tomb robbers out. House Jorasco believes that something within Delera Omaren's tomb is preventing the dead from resting in peace. Only recently have the means been found to open the tomb's great door. Someone needs to venture within and put an end to this plague of undeath.
- Someone is meeting sun-hating representatives from the undercity in the Garden of Respite. The Storm

Lords want this investigated to the fullest extent; it could represent a threat to the city and to their dominion.

- The herbalists of Respite regularly bring back plants from the continent's interior for examination. This time they have brought back something dangerous, something that is growing rapidly and corrupting the Garden of Respite's other plants, making them poisonous or carnivorous. Brave volunteers are needed to venture within before the entire district is overgrown.

SILVERWALL

Population: Primarily dwarves in Coasthold and humans and elves in the rest of the district.

Character: Rough and bawdy in Locksmith Square, driven and serious in Coasthold.

Businesses: Banking, diplomacy, messaging, gladiatorial fighting, locksmiths, pawnshops, security.

Key Personalities: Amilene Santor d'Sivis, Handlon the Brick, Korbek Ghedin d'Kundarak, Margheta Tuvodni, and Toven d'Cannith.

Silverwall is a place of stark contrasts. One half, called Locksmith Square, is alive with color and abuzz with activity, from street performers and peddlers to the comings and goings of locals and visitors alike. The sounds of haggling and laughter, as well as cheers and screams rising from the Red Ring, dominate the air here. Coasthold is the square's silent neighbor. A pervasive sense of gravitas, of orderliness, fills this dignified half of Silverwall—a reminder of its neighbor's boisterous character.

Of all the city's districts, Silverwall is unique in its layout. Other districts, such as Oldgate and Southwatch, have cultural divisions, but only Silverwall is physically divided. And as new arrivals are quick to sense, the two halves could scarcely be less alike.

Locksmith Square, the district's western half, plays host to some of the most notorious personalities and establishments in the city, including the Red Ring and the shattered land's most upscale brothel, Shadows. The eastern half of the district, in contrast, is both a paragon of restraint and a monument to dwarf ingenuity. Dubbed Coasthold, this ward lies entirely outside the walls of the old city and was built from the ground up by the engineers of House Kundarak.

Silverwall gets its name from the peculiar coloration of the walls that surround Locksmith Square. The walls are massive, reaching some 60 feet into the air, but the distinctive silver sheen covers only the sides facing the square. As a result, the entire square is reflected back at itself everywhere one looks, and though the reflections aren't mirrorlike in their clarity, they do serve to surround the area in a mildly disorientating cast, making lights seem more spread out (which in turn generates more shadows) and colors appear brighter. This curious design is found nowhere else in the city and helps lend the square its vibrant character.

The name is doubly appropriate, since Silverwall is easily the wealthiest district in the city. This is not

due to the success of the businesses in Locksmith Square but rather to the vast holdings of the Coasthold dwarves and their prosperous cousin among the Storm Lords. Coasthold is also the seat of international diplomacy in Xen'drik and houses both the Citadel of the Twelve and the Kundarak bank, which secures the wealth of almost every important figure in the city.

COASTHOLD

The easternmost portion of Stormreach is easily the city's most unusual subdivision. A massive trench in the ground once demarcated the eastern border of the old city and today marks the start of Coasthold, the domain of House Kundarak. When the dwarves first arrived in force, they found no substantive construction to the north and east of the trench, though they found nothing wrong with the land itself. It was as though previous civilizations intentionally chose to stay away from the plot of land, despite its prime location along the region's eastern coast. Sensing opportunity, the dwarves approached the Storm Lords with a proposal to purchase the undeveloped land from the city outright. With the help of their allies in the Amanatu family, the deal went through, and House Kundarak immediately set to work on the two massive stone bridges that today link the ward to the rest of Silverwall.

House Kundarak owns every inch of Coasthold, from the harbor to the south to the river mouth in the north. The agreement with the city affords the house a number of perks that other houses cannot claim, chief among them being the right to turn away even the Stormreach Guard at their gates. Despite this apparent loss of power, the Storm Lords have all profited from House Kundarak's presence, and all seem to appreciate the legal loopholes created by having such a reservation in their midst.

LOCKSMITH SQUARE

Stormreach's most infamous ward, Locksmith Square is home to many of the city's more colorful and popular attractions. The Marketplace is the hub of activity during the day, but Locksmith Square takes over at night. Although other districts, such as Respite and the Temple district, offer good food or an evening's entertainment, many sailors, laborers, and adventurers would rather spend their leisure time near the Red Ring, where the atmosphere is riotous and the prices are low.

Many craftspeople maintain shops here, from cobblers to locksmiths. The ward's name arose in the modern city's early days when the Kandars, a family of dwarf locksmiths who curried favor with the Amanatu family, established their business by the great silver walls.

KEY LOCATIONS

The Black Wrack

In a city known for drinking and colorful characters, no establishment has more of the two than the Black

Wrack. Proudly declaring itself Stormreach's biggest tavern, the Wrack is nestled against the silver wall on the Red Ring's north side. The main room is spacious and loud, with a ceiling high enough for the likes of the minotaur Kolos (page 102) to walk without stooping.

The Black Wrack is owned and operated by a nonsense but good-natured fellow named Handlon the Brick (NG male human barbarian 2/ranger 4). Called Brick by his regular customers, Handlon arrived alone in the city aboard a cargo ship in late 976 YK. By the start of 978, he had designed and completed initial construction on the tavern. Within days of its grand opening, the Black Wrack had become one of the city's most popular watering holes. There are many reasons for this, but chief among them—aside from the wide selection of affordable drinks—is Handlon's one rule: All are welcome to his hospitality, regardless of race or cultural heritage. If a squabble erupts, it gets taken outside immediately, or Handlon puts an end to it, often abruptly and painfully. Everyone's gold is good at the Black Wrack.

Today the tavern's popularity is at an all-time high, thanks in part to its widely used wall of notices. What began as a way for Handlon to add some color to his otherwise boring decor has grown into an invaluable resource for adventurers and explorers. It started when he invited his patrons to place job postings, want ads, and other notices on the tavern's north wall. This proved so popular that Handlon soon formalized the practice, organizing the postings into different classifications. Within a few years, many adventurers who arrived in Stormreach knew to check the wall for opportunities that might be in the offing. New arrivals already know of the wall if they succeed on a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check.

Handlon's animal companion is an enormous mastiff (essentially a riding dog), which spends most of its time either sprawled out on the floor by the bar or tracing a lazy perimeter around the tavern's interior. Its name is Sascha, and no matter how drunk or rowdy

the Wrack's patrons get, they know not to involve the dog in their shenanigans, lest they rouse the animal's ire or that of its owner.

Citadel of the Twelve

As part of House Kundarak's agreement with the city, Coasthold hosts the only official outpost of the Twelve on the continent. Soon after the dwarves acquired the land, they set to work on building the citadel, complete with offices for all the dragonmarked houses, with the largest offices reserved for those houses that did not already have enclaves in the city (all houses except Deneith, Jorasco, Lyrandar, Phiarlan, Tharashk, and Kundarak itself).

With exploration of the continent's interior playing such a vital role in Stormreach's economy, the citadel does a good business in selling both magic items and spellcasting services. Clients do have to deal with the limited availability of items and a 20,000 gp cap on their value. Only arcane spells of 5th level or lower are available, and only one person at the citadel is capable of casting 5th-level spells—a reclusive wizard named Toven d'Cannith (N human aristocrat 1/wizard 9)—so a PC's timing has to be right when seeking such magic.

The Storm Lords make a pretty penny on the taxation of citadel services, and House Kundarak takes its own cut in rent and security fees. To offset these expenses, the citadel charges an extra 5% for all magic items and spellcasting services, though this premium is waived for high-ranking members of a dragonmarked house (including PCs who have a dragonmark or the Favored in House feat).

After Toven d'Cannith, the most accomplished spellcaster at the citadel's disposal is Amilene Santor d'Sivis (LN female gnome expert 2/wizard 7). She spends most of her time next door, in the Kundarak enclave. If her services are needed or requested, however, she gladly pops over to help and maintains good relations with most of the other spellcasters at the citadel.

THE MAGIC OF ELDRED'S POOL

Eldred's Pool is a major artifact. Casting *detect magic* reveals an overwhelming aura of abjuration radiating from it, while *detect psionics* (EPH 91) reveals an overwhelming aura of psychoportation (if the DM prefers, the pool's aura can be detected only by *detect magic* or *detect psionics*, not both). The pool is immune to magical and psionic effects and is indestructible. It weighs several tons.

Although the pool does not circulate the water that collects within it, any liquid dumped into it is purified instantly, a process that removes all the liquid's toxins, bacteria, and supernatural qualities. Many locals, therefore, collect their water at the pool.

The pool's most powerful effect, however, remains unknown to most.

The pool is a powerful bane against extraplanar creatures (any creature that has the extraplanar subtype). Every time such a creature sees its own reflection in the pool's water, it must immediately succeed on a DC 30 Will save or be sent back to its plane of origin (this effect has a caster level of 20th). Even extraplanar creatures possessing another creature—such as the quori who possess the Inspired—are torn from their hosts and sent home on a failed save. The Riedran consul, Lord Katanavash, is aware of the pool's power and warns fellow Inspired to avert their eyes from it.

Eldred's Pool

Most long-time residents of Stormreach know their city was a thri-kreen colony centuries ago, but almost no traces remain. The mysterious thri-kreen relic at the center of Locksmith Square is one of the few remnants of that time. Locals refer to it as Eldred's Pool, after a sage who garnered notoriety for his fascination with and later hatred of the object. Historians relate that Eldred was an antiquities scholar who arrived in Stormreach in the early years of the first Storm Lords' reign. The arrival of a wizened bookworm in this pirate boomtown was made all the more strange by his immediate obsession with the centerpiece of Locksmith Square. Reports came in about how he was paying individuals of low character to conduct experiments for him, from attempting to carve pieces off the thing to bringing him samples of the water that collected within its basin. Eldred's tale culminates in him approaching the Storm Lords with a demand that they destroy the object without delay. When asked why, legend tells that his only reply was, "Because it endangers us all." In the absence of corroborating evidence, the Storm Lords refused and sent the "mad" scholar on his way. Within a day, Eldred had vanished without a trace.

Eldred's Pool resembles a circular fountain seemingly carved from a single piece of a dark green stone. It measures 24 feet in diameter, with an outer rim that rises 2 feet off the ground. At the center of the pool sits the object's most unusual attraction: a sculpture depicting two six-limbed figures standing back to back. Each figure balances on one leg, and the first of two pairs of arms meet in the center of each figure's torso, palm flat against palm, as if in prayer. Each figure's other two arms are raised skyward, palms to the sky, as if hefting a great weight, and each one's head is a shiny stone that seems bowed low, as if in supplication.

House Kundarak Enclave

The House Kundarak enclave is the most secure structure in the city. For those who know of the Kundarak penchant for security, this comes as no surprise. The two bridges that span the Silverwall trench deposit visitors at the enclave's entrance, which is marked by three small guardhouses. Two guard towers look down on the main entrance, with another three towers spread around the enclave's walls. Kundarak guards are posted at the towers day and night. Each main entrance guardhouse typically contains four dwarf fighters, each wearing banded mail, and two iron defenders (*ECS* 287). Guards will admit only those with appointments, though they make exceptions for the Storm Lords, members of any dragonmarked house, and anyone having business with the Citadel of the Twelve. In the latter case, the guards escort visitors both to and from the citadel.

The enclave is composed of a central keep and several outbuildings, all of which are surrounded by a 20-foot-wide moat filled with water. As a full-round action, guards



Eldred's Pool, a relic of the thri-kreen civilization

inside the enclave can turn a winch that retracts the four bridges spanning the moat, and if there is a serious threat to the enclave, a living cloudkill (*ECS* 293) can be instantly released on the enclave's west side. This creature was retrieved from the Mournland at great expense, and the guards are nervous about its presence.

The enclave's residents, all dwarves sworn to House Kundarak, venture regularly into the city for business and pleasure but rarely without at least one armed guard, and often with two or three, especially if the dwarf is a banker or other house official. If necessary, the dwarves can get by inside the enclave for quite some time; it has ample food stored and plenty of living space to take care of its residents for a month at least. If residents need healing, they can turn to Margheta Tuvodni (N female dwarf warrior 1/cleric 9), a priest of Kol Korran. She also oversees many of the enclave's day-to-day operations.

Most visitors to the enclave come for its bank, which is an architectural beauty. Three stories of stone walls gilded with silver and gold, the bank is renowned for the slaughterstone eviscerator (*MM3* 160) that stands watch over its main lobby. Many suspect that somewhere beneath it, watching over the vault, is its twin.

House Lyrandar Shipyard

House Kundarak's arrangement with the Storm Lords transferred all undeveloped land on the city's eastern edge to the house. Even though the dwarves have taken advantage of this, much of the land to the north and south of the Kundarak enclave remains undeveloped. Not ones to let a business opportunity slip by, the Kundarak dwarves offered to lease a strip of land on the harbor to House Lyrandar so that a shipyard could be built. House Lyrandar happily agreed to the deal. The shipyard is still under construction, but already a few ships have been completed there. The arrangement has been profitable for both houses and has served to increase the overall standing of House Lyrandar within the city.

The Red Ring

Once the city's leading entertainment venue and source of gambling revenue, the Red Ring has fallen in

prominence in recent years. Rancorous internal politics at the arena and expanding egos on the Blood Council have put the ring at increasing odds with certain powerful interests in Stormreach, but it remains a popular and profitable enterprise and continues to receive the support of the Storm Lords. If that support were to wane any further, however, the Red Ring could find itself in jeopardy. See page 142 for information about the ring's Annual Games and page 99 for information about the bloodbound, the ring's dedicated gladiators.

Shadows

Locksmith Square is home to the city's most upscale, discreet, and profitable brothel, Shadows. Only those who know a password can even find out where Shadows is located, and then they need a second password to get inside. On a successful DC 20 Gather Information check, a PC can locate someone who knows the first password and who the brothel's contact person is (how much this information costs varies from contact to contact). This contact will then ask, "What do shadows seek?" The correct reply: "Illumination." If the correct answer is given, and the contact thinks the answerer would be a suitable customer, the contact reveals the brothel's location and the second password, which changes regularly.

It is common knowledge among the wealthy elite that Shadows is backed by House Thuranni. The house maintains no enclave in the city and takes great pains to stay neutral in dealings between the Storm Lords and the other dragonmarked houses. Shadows is a legitimate and prosperous business, and the Thuranni elves seem content in their role as purveyors of pleasure in the city. The disappearance of someone with powerful enemies occasionally ends up being credited to the house, but most residents know better than to discuss this for long.

The Titanswalk

A massive gatehouse connects the shining silver walls at the southwest corner of the district, and all visitors from Cross and Respite must pass beneath its stone archway. Beyond this entryway lies a raised path, set between two rows of mammoth statues. Local historians theorize that

OVERHEARD IN SILVERWALL

"See that dwarf? The one coming down the walk just now? Don't let the funny hat and gold-gilt cloak deceive you: He's a Kundarak, and there's a reason he walks the streets of Stormreach with only one bodyguard."

"Oh, I'll gladly take that bet, I will. If you think that a prancing june bug like Rossart has a chance against a powerhouse like Mourning Mikah, you're an even bigger fool than I took you for. Mikah's one of Kolos's stable, and a veteran Ringer to boot."

"You honestly think that knocking over Shadows is the way to make a name for yourself in this town? Your name might be Durko the Deathless out here, among us street scum, but in there, it's just a nickname—one that's apt to get you killed, or worse. Trust me, you want no part of them elves. And if Spider finds out you were even contemplating such a thing, it won't matter: You'll be Durko the Dead by sunup. Is that clear enough, or do I need to paint a picture for you?"

the gatehouse, called the Titanswalk (or simply the Walk to locals), was once the site of pomp-filled processions. The statues themselves are awe inspiring, rising just high enough for their heads to be glimpsed over the high silver walls. Each of the seven statues is believed to represent a significant figure in the history of the giants, though not even giant historians know the figures' names.

Tower of Kol Korran

If Coasthold can be likened to a fortress, then the Tower of Kol Korran is the unbreachable keep within. The tower is the most secure structure in the city, and House Kundarak has taken every precaution to ensure that it stays that way. The dwarves even removed the tower from direct view, surrounding it with a massive circular wall several feet thick. A lone gatehouse near the Kundarak enclave is the only means of entering the tower's courtyard, and the gatehouse and its doors are covered in protective wards.

Nobody outside House Kundarak knows what goes on inside the tower. Whatever it is, locals know it has little to do with the god Kol Korran. In the months after the tower's construction, followers of Kol Korran would approach the tower, seeking to offer prayers there, only to be turned away by guards. When asked to clarify the tower's purpose, the guards confirmed that it was no house of worship but an extension of the enclave, where important matters of house policy and security could be tested. The agreement the house had made with the city forbade any interference from the Storm Lords, and the enclave's presence in Stormreach—outside the reach of the Korth Edicts—forbade any interference from the other dragon-marked houses. Some burglars could not resist testing the tower's security, but each one disappeared soon after, never to be seen or heard from again.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Locksmith Square is a notorious haven for pickpockets. When one of the PCs is robbed, the trail leads to Shadows. This could be the start of a romance with the exotic pickpocket or a gateway into one of House Thuranni's schemes.
- A riot breaks out in Locksmith Square following a terrible upset in the Red Ring. Depending on how the

PCs handle the situation, they could gain the friendship of the Amanatus and the Stormreach Guard or the enmity of anyone they injure in the riot.

- Someone is willing to pay an astounding sum if the PCs can penetrate the security of the Tower of Kol Korran. He won't reveal his identity; is he a member of the King's Citadel, a rival house, or House Kundarak itself? Any investigation of Kundarak's affairs is a dangerous business—especially if the job is a setup from the start.

SOUTHWATCH

Population: Mostly human with a majority of Karrns.

Character: Paranoid and dangerous.

Businesses: Small market stalls, cottage industries, laborers for other districts. 1,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Berrinessa, Drago Thul, Gaulronak, Harysh, and Captain Smargat.

As you pass through the gates and enter Grindstone, the air takes on a different feel. People glower at you from doorways or shutter their windows. Children stop playing their games, and only street vendors look you in the eye. These people seem more taciturn than usual for Karrns, but why?

Citizens from other districts move quickly, as if eager to be away from here. They seem a little fearful, and that gives the residents some measure of pride.

With only the Koronoo River between it and the jungle, Southwatch is exposed to the wilds. Over the centuries, the district's older buildings have been dismantled to provide other districts with building material, and only fragments remain of the great wall that used to defend this stretch of the city's southern face. Across the river, the Tents of Rushemé lie ready to trade with the city.

Southwatch is home to those not afraid to live on the edge, whether pariahs, poor people with no choice, or those who have dealings with giants. Among these people are many settlers from Karrnath. The freedom to worship the Blood of Vol openly has drawn many Karrns to the city, and the Last War sent its share of expatriates.

Justice here is rough, enforced by the Swords of Karrn under the leadership of Drago Thul (page 77).

OVERHEARD IN SOUTHWATCH

"You think you get any say what goes on in Grindstone? We get to say what happens in Grindstone, nobody else, just us. Now, we're going to dock a finger to remind you. Every time you look at the stump, remember who's really in charge."

"It's not too scary living near those great big lum-moxes. Some nights, special nights I guess, just as the

sun sets, they sing in their own language. The sound moves right through you—so deep but so beautiful."

"Have you seen my cat? He's a tabby tomcat, mackerel colored. Probably run off to the Ship's Cat again. Anyone would think he belonged to that shifter rather than me! What's the use of a genuine ship's cat getting fat and lazy on table scraps in an inn, I ask you?"

Deneith Enclave

Koronoo River

Falconer's Spire

*Keep of the
Silver Flame*



The Bazaar



Stormreach

Kundarak Enclave

The Red Ring

Jorasco Enclave

Shargon's Talon



If the Storm Lords think they need to intervene, they are more likely to send in House Deneith mercenaries than the Stormreach Guard, which would be out-matched by the Swords.

GRINDSTONE

Grindstone is the heart of the Karrnathi influence over Southwatch. Festivals and holidays from the homeland are celebrated here with exuberance, and the ward's Karrnathi residents regard themselves as separate from the city's other citizens. The militia known as the Swords of Karrn enforces order, and between Karrnathi pride and what amounts to martial law, Grindstone is essentially a city within the city.

SUMMERFIELD

Karrns might dominate much of Southwatch, but they are not the only settlers within the area. The Summerfield ward contains a large amount of the district's housing, and many of the residents are not Karrns. The ward has a mix of poor people who cannot afford to live elsewhere, or choose not to squeeze into an overcrowded district such as Cross, and well-to-do explorers and pirates who would rather live in the open than with the wealthy folk of Respite. Summerfield is therefore welcoming to almost anyone, and many of the residents do not take kindly to the Swords of Karrn throwing their weight around in this ward.

TENTS OF RUSHEMÉ

The Tents of Rushemé stand a short distance from the mutually agreed-upon border of Stormreach. Amid the tents, nomadic tribes of giants come together to trade with one another and the people of Stormreach, to be close to their ancestral city, to perform their rites, and to hire on as guides into the continent's interior.

Gaulronak (N male hill giant druid 6) is the oldest and most respected giant residing in the encampment. An herbalist, he often sells jungle herbs and plants to cooks and healers. He serves as the main liaison between the giants of the tents and the Storm Lords. Of late, he has become more and more preoccupied with the city's vision circles. Many see him as a simple wanderer, but he is an important spiritual leader among his people; see page 111 for more information.

Although Hular and the other half-giants at Black Iron (page 37) have some of the closest relationships with the giants, others have managed to forge relationships with them. The giants make the rules among the tents, but the Stormreach Guard keeps a close watch on them; Rushemé is largely peaceful, but the physical might of the giants is enough to make the Storm Lords nervous.

KEY LOCATIONS

The Black Freighter

A shiplike tavern on the Koronoo River, the Black Freighter is run by Captain Smargat (CN male human ranger 3/fighter 5) and is known for its dealings with the Order of the Emerald Claw. See page 85 for more information.

The Ship's Cat

A tangle of densewood twigs that have been thatched together, the Ship's Cat is an inn run by Harysh (NG female shifter ranger 1/expert 5), who has a reputation for honor, hospitality, fairness, and discretion. This makes her a valued intermediary for many. The inn takes its name from Harysh's dozen cats, which share the place with guests. Familiars and animal companions receive excellent care at the inn, as long as they do not raise the resident cats' hackles. For another aspect to Harysh, see page 156.

CHARACTERS IN THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

Seld the Gray Sister (N female gnome rogue 5): Deep in the Temple district, hidden in plain sight among the crowds, can be found Seld the Gray Sister. This gnome is acknowledged by various groups in the city as a master spy, but none claim that she works for them and none are entirely sure whom she works for. She seems well sponsored, rich enough to buy up snippets of interesting information from any who have them for sale and able to sponsor thefts and other works of espionage, though the pattern to these purchases, if any, is inscrutable.

The God Man (CN male human adept 4): Temple Row has more than its share of wild-eyed mystics, but one in particular stands out. Waking from a fever, the person now known as the God Man claimed knowledge of forgotten gods and set about commemorating

them. A homeless wanderer, he sleeps in Temple Row's shrines and carries lost gods upon his body in the form of tattoos and dolls. Every so often he adds a new god to his personal pantheon, from Abassa, goddess of pear cider, to Zelthanon, god of cocked dice.

Tydameira the Loveforged (N female personality warforged fighter 4/bard 1): Tydameira spent much of her time in the Last War serving with humans, and she became intrigued by love. She likes to study any manner of romantic interactions that she can. This has led her to work at the Pink Conch as a bouncer. Despite her considerable combat skills, Tydameira has rejected Steeljack's invitation to join the Iron Watch (page 117); she wants to be among humanoids and has little interest in her own kind.

Temple of Vol

The Blood of Vol operates openly within Grindstone, and its temple is the main place of religious observance for the ward's Karrns. Congregants call the temple Rosewood, after the crimson ivy that covers it, and are led by the priest Berrinessa (N female human adept 9), a quiet herbalist. The temple occupies an old ruin, its rituals performed amid broken pillars and statues of the past. Despite Stormreach's laissez-faire approach toward religions, the presence of the Blood of Vol does cause uneasiness in other districts. Remaining within Grindstone gives the temple a measure of protection from its enemies. See page 81 for more about the Blood of Vol in Stormreach.

The Thrifty Traveler

A longtime competitor of Havulak Prospecting (page 30), the Thrifty Traveler is a clutter of tents, outfits, and odds and ends that might be handy in the wilderness. Located in Summerfield, the shop undercuts any of Havulak's prices by a few copper pieces. See the sidebar Seekers of Stormreach, page 81, for information about the shop's owner, Thrifty Thom.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Something is stirring up the giants at the Tents of Rushemé. They have thrown up a wooden palisade around their camp, and loud arguments can be heard from behind it. The arguments involve a new tribe that came out of the jungle a few days ago with a carved icon. Understandably nervous, the Storm Lords want to send someone into the camp to ascertain what is going on and to defuse the situation if possible.
- The Swords of Karrn have gone too far and have executed a member of the Stormreach Guard, openly defying the Storm Lords. An attempt by the guards to restore order ended with the Swords routing them. In addition to turning to House Deneith for help, the Storm Lords seek adventurers to help restore order in the ward.
- In Grindstone, the remnants of the city wall are riddled with tunnels and chambers that descend into the earth. Some show signs of a catastrophe in the past,

a force that destroyed the wall from underground. A recent mudslide has revealed a deeper set of tunnels. Perhaps they hold the answer to what happened.

TEMPLE DISTRICT

Population: A mix of many races, with more humans and elves than any other.

Character: A confusion and profusion of sound, color, theater, and religion.

Businesses: Entertainment, accommodation, religious services. 6,000 gp limit.

Key Personalities: Jirian Zayne, Morian Shol d'Phiarlan, and Zarzalia Shol d'Phiarlan.

Your senses are assaulted on all sides by the overwhelming presence of this part of the city.

Sight: Bright colors, pennants, entertainers dressed like color-blind magpies, swooping arches, green leaves, and colorful lanterns.

Smell: The tang of spices on the wind, the hint of incense and oils from the temples.

Sound: Temple adepts calling passersby to worship, hawkers drawing attention to their sweetmeats and savories, bards plucking at their instruments, actors calling out the merits of their plays, and, booming over all of it, the performance in the Livewood Theater.

Standing at the fork of the Koronoo River, the Temple district is the heart of entertainment and worship in the city. Because of the abundant groundwater here, the district is subject to more subsidence than other parts of the city, its stone buildings cracked and its cobbled streets uneven. Aside from the city walls and the stone banks of the Livewood Theater, few ancient structures remain. New buildings are crafted out of wood, many of them out of livewood. The district's architecture is marked by arches and domes, intermingled with trees festooned with paper lanterns.

When House Phiarlan arrived in the city, the giants' amphitheater—now the Livewood Theater—was a major attraction to them, so they established their enclave here. Nearby are various entertainment venues, accommodations for visitors, and many shrines.

OVERHEARD IN THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

"Praise not the greater gods; they do not need your prayers. Spare a thought instead for the little gods, the ones to whom we all pray but whose names we do not know. The ones who keep our food warm, our feet shod. Praise the little gods! Praise Humoona, goddess of lemon zest. What would your sweet cakes be without her?"

"But hark, you hear that sound? The faint blowing of the wind where once there was a storm. Once a gale could determine the direction of the wind, but this?"

No arrow could find the mark, but perhaps a mark could find the arrow . . ."

"Ladies and gentlemen, if I might speak to you of the Pink Conch's advantages for a moment. Our services are refined, our men and women unmatched, and our discretion limitless. And at the Conch, there is no theatrical subterfuge, as you might find at the Livewood Theater. No, here what you see is what you get. And I'd wager we have much you'd like to see."



The Pink Conch caters to everyone's needs

KEY LOCATIONS

Bogwater Tavern

The Bogwater Tavern, despite the name, is at the higher end of the entertainment market. Built open to the sky, it is protected from the rain by colorful awnings. Here customers can listen to bards' tales, away from the district's bustle.

Golden Wing Inn

The Golden Wing Inn is popular among younger immigrants finding their way in the city. Relatively spartan and reasonably priced, the Golden Wing is partly underground and smells of damp earth. Though cheaper lodging is available in the district, the Golden Wing has the advantage of being a safer place, its staff having no patience for customers getting their pockets picked or being cheated at cards or dice.

House Phiarlan Enclave

House Phiarlan's enclave is a buttressed stone building next to the river. The first time it was built, it sank into the boggy ground. The second time, it was built on the same ground and endured. Rumors persist that the first attempt was not a mistake but a way of sinking part of the enclave underground so that much of the house's business would be away from prying eyes. Viceroy Morian Shol d'Phiarlan oversees the house's interests in Stormreach. See page 67 for more information.

Keep of the Silver Flame

The Keep of the Silver Flame was intended to serve as a mighty ministry that would bring the light of the Flame to this savage land. The Flamic architects showed their usual persistence in creating this stone building, sinking great pillars into the boggy ground and then topping it with a spire of stone and silver. The priests of the temple, led by Jirian Zayne, do not sell their services, though they aid the faithful of the Flame at no charge. For more about the Silver Flame in Stormreach, see page 79.

Livewood Theater

Managed by Zarzalia Shol d'Phiarlan, the Livewood Theater (page 25) is the largest theater in the city.

Object Desire

Across the street from the House Phiarlan enclave, this small magic shop benefits from its association with the house. The shop specializes in theatrical illusions, signs, scenes, and sounds and mostly caters to the needs of the wards' performers. The shop stocks a few wondrous items and wands that fit this theme (maximum value 6,000 gp). Panlamin Felwrought (N female elf wizard 5) is particularly noted for her prowess with illusions and is much sought after by theater groups.

Onyx Fountain

A hive of small performance spaces, rehearsal rooms, and

studios, the Onyx Fountain (page 24) is House Phiarlan's training ground—for stage performance and intrigue.

The Pink Conch

Less expensive than Shadows, the Pink Conch is a comfortable and discreet brothel. The Conch claims that "what you see is what you get," that the house does not employ changelings or use illusions in its work. Whether this is true is an open question. Many of the men and women who work at the Conch are also actors in the district's theaters.

Temple Row

A jumble of shrines and stalls selling devotional knickknacks, Temple Row is a bazaar of religion. Most of the street's priests, prophets, and charlatans make appeals on behalf of the Sovereign Host, but it is not unusual for representatives of the Dark Six or even the Dragon Below to preach among them.

Vestrii's Arms

Near the Keep of the Silver Flame, Vestrii's Arms caters to the customer who wants a weapon but doesn't want to show it. The shop makes a variety of concealable weapons, particularly ones that a performer might want: juggling balls or clubs that sprout blades, iron-bound flutes, sword canes, and the like.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Brawls between the Knights of Thrane and the Order of the Emerald Claw are common in the district, but the civilian faithful of the Blood of Vol are spared this violence. Tonight, though, a Seeker of the Blood has been stabbed to death and dumped in the river. The residents of Grindstone blame the Knights of Thrane, who indignantly deny responsibility. If the real culprit cannot be found, even the Iron Watch might not be able to contain the trouble.
- A new play is making the rounds. Never performed, the script itself is causing a fuss. Titled *Rough Weather*, it is a bawdy comedy that makes most of its jokes at the expense of the Storm Lords. The lords are offering a considerable reward to anyone who can find and stop the printing of the script and bring the playwright into custody.
- The Livewood Theater is having problems with its halfling, gnome, and dwarf workers and audience members because a human was recently cast as Lothar in a production of Globach and Lothar. The problem is that Lothar is traditionally a halfling, and the theater plans to make the human actor look like one through magic. Shorter actors have walked out in protest. Zarzalia Shol d'Phiarlan is at her wit's end and needs help to break the strike, one way or another.

URBAN LEGENDS

Every city has its share of rumors, whispers, and tales of dread. Below are a few commonly circulated ones in Stormreach. It's up to you to decide if they have any truth in them.

The Blood Devil: The only oath that means anything to a pirate is one sworn in blood. To this day, many Stormreachers swear kinship and seal business contracts with a blood oath. It is widely held that a person who breaks such an oath becomes the prey of a hulking red-skinned monster, with a gore-drenched mane and a mouth full of sucking leeches. The Blood Devil hunts down oath breakers and drinks every drop of their blood, "since they obviously don't value it highly, breaking oaths sworn by it and all."

Demon Glass: Old salts whisper of an enormous glass sphere that was discovered in the giants' ruins long ago. The sphere was shattered by accident, unleashing a host of imprisoned demons, which devoured the explorers and moved on. But some demons remained trapped in the sphere's fragments, which are supposedly scattered throughout the city to this day. Urchins collect this glass, unaware of its evil, and sell it to glassblowers and artisans, who melt it down to craft windowpanes, mirrors, and trinkets. Sometimes a person who stares into

the dusky glass sees a hideous fiend, which reaches out and pulls the person inside its prison. People often mysteriously go missing in Stormreach, some vanishing from behind locked doors. Whispers of "demon-gazing" are often the only explanations for these disappearances.

Night Hunters: A drow tribe resided in the ruins of Stormreach before an unknown fate turned it into dust and memory. Today, the city's more superstitious citizens believe that the spirits of the drow chieftains sometimes march in the dead of night, a host of their bravest warriors leading the way. The haunting call of a bone flute heralds their approach. Anyone who does not bow before the chieftains is decapitated, the heads carried off to the realm of the dead. When wind whistles through the city's streets at night, more than a few Stormreachers recoil from the sound and drop to their knees in fear.

The Skin Shucker: Supposedly murdering indigents and visitors who are unlikely to be missed, the Skin Shucker shucks off a victim's entire suit of flesh using barbed tentacles, which he keeps concealed in his open chest cavity. He collects the skins and wears them at night. They say he lives somewhere near fly-infested slaughterhouses in Forgelight.



Your flame is no match
for my darkness,"
Whisper snarled.

We'll see," Marcus
said, and his shield
burst into light.

POWER AND POLITICS

Stormreach is governed by the Storm Lords, hereditary rulers whose pirate ancestors laid the foundations of the modern city. The Storm Lords wield the power of justice and hold the keys to the city's coffers. But other powers move in Stormreach as well. Over the last two centuries, many forces have taken an interest in the city. The dragonmarked houses, for instance, have begun expanding their influence beyond Khorvaire. For some, the city is a logical extension of their core business; for others, it is a chance to establish operations outside the restrictions of the Korth Edicts. The Five Nations have no authority in the city, but they are forces to be reckoned with in the wider world, and they have their own interests in Stormreach.

All these factions have roles to play in a Stormreach adventure. Dragonmarked heirs might be drawn into the schemes of their houses. Heroes of the Five Nations might be asked to serve the interests of their rulers, or they might turn to a consulate for assistance. And the Storm Lords can be valuable allies or dangerous enemies for adventurers of any nationality.

THE STORM LORDS

In Stormreach, political power is measured in gold and steel. The first Storm Lords were the most capable pirates and smugglers of the Thunder Sea. They saw the opportunities in working with Galifar, and together they were a strong enough force that Galifar agreed to work with them. Between the wealth amassed through decades of crime and the deals with Galifar, and the combined military forces of these pirate kings, the first Storm Lords were able to assert their will over the other people of Stormreach. They created the Stormreach Compact, a document that lays out the few laws of the city—the first of which is that the Storm Lords and their descendants will rule the city until it falls.

The Stormreach Compact assigns specific duties and areas of influence to each family. The Wylkes line, for example, holds power over the Harbor district and has the right to set docking fees; however,

the Wylkes are also bound to maintain the docks and to facilitate travel and trade. Each Storm Lord holds final authority over specific districts, but in practice, any Storm Lord can exercise power throughout the city, as long as the local lord does not object.

The Storm Lords work together to maintain Stormreach, but the balance of power between them is constantly shifting. Adventurers might become long-term pawns in this quiet struggle, or they can simply be the tools of the moment. The Storm Lords are always looking for capable agents, and PCs will likely be some of the most skillful in the city.

THE AMANATUS

Race: Dwarf.

Founder and Current Leader: Yorrick Amanatu.

Primary Sphere of Influence: The Stormreach Guard.

Family Business: The Stormreach Recruiters.

Districts: Respite, Silverwall.

Allies: House Kundarak, the Red Ring.

Enemies: House Lyrandar, Paulo Omaren, Jonas Wylkes.

This dwarf family has its roots in the Cloudreavers of the Lhazaar Principalities. When Korchan Amanatu failed to claim the crown of Krag, he took his ships south to the Thunder Sea. Reaving under the sign of the broken crown, the Amanatu pirates were known as the most ruthless killers of the south sea. Korchan would never have accepted peace with Galifar, but he was finally slain on the open seas. His young son Yorrick joined the other Storm Lords, bringing the raw power of the Amanatu reavers to the alliance.

Yorrick Amanatu remains a Storm Lord to this day—the sole survivor of the founders. Now 260 years old, he relies on magic items (an *amulet of health* and a *belt of giant strength*) to offset the ravages of time. He believes in the Stormreach Compact, but he also knows that the only way to hold the city together is through personal power. In the past, other lords sought to take control of the city, and it was the strength and cunning of Amanatu that crushed this treachery. To this day,

*A typical meeting
of the Storm Lords*



Lord Yorrick searches for ways to expand his personal power, always believing he has the best interests of the city and the other lords at heart.

The Amanatu reavers formed the backbone of the original Stormreach Guard, and the Amanatu line is directly responsible for training the Guard and managing the Stormreach Recruiters. Many of the chief recruiters and most capable officers of the Guard are Lord Yorrick's children. If the day ever came for a civil war between the Storm Lords, most of the Guard would follow his lead. Over the years, Lord Yorrick has also developed a strong bond with House Kundarak. He negotiated the sale of the Coasthold ward when Kundarak settled in the region and helped place the Citadel of the Twelve there, and he frequently uses the Stormreach Guard to serve the interests of Kundarak. In return, Lord Yorrick receives considerable wealth, a side benefit to the greater stability that he believes he's brought to the city.

Even though Yorrick recognizes the vital role House Lyrandar plays in bringing the shipping trade to Stormreach, he was born a pirate and a Cloudreaver, and he still remembers the bitter battles against half-elf privateers. Quite a few Lyrandar captains hold ancestral grudges against the old pirate. So far, Lord Yorrick hasn't let this situation interfere with his vital work, but he maintains a cold demeanor when dealing with half-elves of all stripes, and he prefers to let the

Lassite and Wylkes families negotiate with the House of Storms.

Despite his age, Lord Yorrick is an imposing figure. He shaves and oils his head, and he wears his black and silver beard in long braids. He always appears ready for battle; he typically wears a mithral chain shirt and carries a heavy mace engraved with silver. Provided he has expert levels (see the sidebar "The Secrets of the Coin Lords"), he has high ranks in Intimidate and Sense Motive; little escapes his keen eyes.

THE LASSITES

Race: Human.

Founder: Molou Lassite.

Current Leader: Varen Lassite.

Primary Sphere of Influence: Diplomacy and commerce.

Family Business: Molou's Distillery.

Districts: Cross, Marketplace.

Allies: House Ghallanda, House Tharashk, Kirris Sel Shadra.

Enemies: None.

Around 800 YK, Molou Lassite was one of the greatest smugglers of Stormreach. He was also a master brewer, and the Lassites were beloved by the buccaneers and scoundrels of the region. Molou Lassite contributed

little military force to the Storm Lords, but he gained the invaluable good will of the common people, and many say that he bought the peace with kuryeva.

The Lassites had an easy transition to honest living. The pirates used their considerable wealth to expand their brewing operations. Today Molou's Distillery is one of the largest employers in Stormreach, and its kuryeva is popular across the Five Nations. The Lassite family was set in charge of the Marketplace, and the Lassites work to settle disputes between merchants and to smooth the wheels of commerce. Traditionally, the Lassites are the diplomats of Stormreach. When foreign dignitaries need to be entertained or the interests of Stormreach need to be taken abroad, the Lassites are brought into play.

The family's current head is Varen Lassite, a handsome man just reaching his middle years. Of all the Storm Lords, Lord Varen is the only one who is beloved by his subjects. He has a reputation for generosity, and though he cannot always supply justice, he will buy a drink for anyone who suffers misfortune in the Marketplace. He is the epitome of the dashing swashbuckler—romantic, witty, with a fine eye for beauty and an appreciation for skilled swordplay. Beyond this, he is a clever and careful negotiator, capable of manipulating stronger enemies into battling one another.

Volen Lassite (LN male human expert 5) is Lord Varen's uncle, the former lord of the Marketplace, and the current manager of Molou's Distillery. This position is a family tradition; when age starts to catch up with the Lassite Storm Lord, he or she passes the title to a younger family member, chosen for wit and charisma. Volen continues to advise his nephew, and he remains a tremendously popular man. He holds monthly parties at the Lassite manor in Stormhaven and always invites a few lucky people chosen by whim; if a party of adventurers catches his eye, his invitation offers a chance to mingle with the city's wealthy and powerful.

Lord Varen's oldest daughter, Naleen (N female human bard 2/expert 2), is being groomed to take the position of Storm Lord. She is a year younger than her brother Vasken, but Naleen has proven to be far more adept at the game of politics. As heir apparent, she engages in a fair amount of diplomacy and is brought in when a situation calls for mediation.

The Lassites have few enemies, having chosen to avoid direct conflict with the other lords; given this neutrality, they serve as mediators in times of crisis. They also have a number of powerful allies. Over the years they have established a solid bond with House Tharashk, helping to meet the house's needs in Cross. The Lassites also have a strong relationship with House Ghallanda. Although the halflings maintain a minimal presence in Stormreach, the kuryeva trade forms a connection between the two that extends across the Thunder Sea. Finally, while the Lassites are on good

terms with all the Storm Lords, Lord Varen has established a close friendship with Lady Kirris Sel Shadra, and the two act to support each other.

THE OMARENS

Race: Human.

Founder: Delera Omaren.

Current Leader: Paulo Omaren.

Primary Sphere of Influence: City infrastructure.

Family Business: The Stormreach Forge.

Districts: Forgelight, Temple.

Allies: House Cannith, House Deneith, the Iron Watch.

Enemy: Yorrick Amanatu.

At the end of the eighth century YK, Delera Omaren was the pirate queen of the Thunder Sea. Although her buccaneers were not as brutal as the Amanatus, she was bold and clever, and she had amassed a following and a fortune by the time Galifar sought an end to piracy. When the Stormreach Compact was drawn up, no one questioned Delera's right to sit on the council.

As it turned out, Delera was better suited to the life of a pirate than that of an administrator. She invested much of her fortune in the Stormreach Forge and the Foundry, and her family was tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of the city and outfitting the Stormreach Guard. Lacking political savvy, Delera agreed to provide these services at too low a cost, and over the years, this generosity caused the Omaren fortune to fade as the other Storm Lords profited.

Some of the Omaren lords have done their best to live up to their obligations. Others have tried varying approaches to break the Omaren curse. In 890 YK, Castal Omaren sought to eliminate the other lords and seize control of the city. He misjudged Yorrick Amanatu's influence over the Stormreach Guard, and the mistake cost him his life. The lords allowed Castal's heir to retain his title, but further penalties were assessed, and the new lord was deeply subservient to the rest of the council.

Lady Paulo Omaren is determined to restore her family's honor. She bears a special grudge toward Lord Yorrick and the Amanatus. Not only was the dwarf directly responsible for the death of Lord Castal, but the Amanatus' power is derived from the Stormreach Guard—soldiers outfitted by the Omaren forge. Nonetheless, her thirst for power and vengeance is tempered by a wisdom her predecessors lacked. She knows that it will take more than ambition to unseat the Amanatus. She presents herself as an innovator, looking for new solutions to the challenges that face Stormreach. Lady Paulo has been working with Cannith South, allowing the house to establish facilities inside the Foundry and the Stormreach Forge. She approached the warforged Steeljack and created the Iron Watch (page 117); Lord Yorrick might hold the loyalty of the Stormreach

Guard, but as the Iron Watch grows, so does Lady Paulo's confidence. She has also fought to increase the power and influence of House Deneith. She has

recently taken Lord Greigur d'Deneith as a lover, and she thinks of Deneith as her own personal army, just waiting for her command. Secretly, she envisions

THE SECRETS OF THE COIN LORDS

The Coin Lords' public personas and family histories are a matter of record. The people of Stormreach think they know everything about Varen Lassite and Yorrick Amanatu, but they couldn't be more wrong. Every family has secrets—and the Coin Lords have more than most.

Each of the Coin Lords has a hidden motivation. Five options are presented here; it's up to the DM to decide which secret is associated with each Coin Lord, and which is a red herring.

The Murderer (LN expert 8) is a capable administrator and diplomat—levelheaded and dispassionate, true to his (or her) word, always doing his best to hold Stormreach together. However, he is also responsible for the death of a prince of Breland, and a warrant for his arrest remains on the books. Consequently, he rarely leaves Stormreach, and the King's Dark Lanterns seek to kidnap him and bring him to Breland to face justice. If this is Yorrick Amanatu, the crime might date all the way back to his years of piracy. If it's Varen Lassite or Paulo Omaren, it might be a relatively recent crime—a duel sparked by an unwise romance. If it's Kirris Sel Shadra, the victim might have been a captain of the King's Citadel who was investigating her smugglers.

The Orphan (N artificer 6) has always had a talent for artifice and infusion. However, she never knew about her blood connection to House Cannith until she manifested the Lesser Mark of Making, just one year ago. It turns out that her pirate ancestor was punished for stealing from the house. Now this Coin Lord is trying to decide whether she should reveal her true nature to House Cannith and how this revelation would affect her role as a lord of Stormreach; beyond this, with Cannith fractured, she needs to determine which Cannith faction she should deal with. Since the Mark of Making can only be carried by humans, this has to be Paulo Omaren or Varen Lassite. As the lord of the Stormreach Forge, it makes sense for Omaren to be an artificer—but Varen might have been hiding his interests while running the distillery.

The Fiend (LE rakshasa sorcerer 5) is one of the Lords of Dust, a rakshasa named Kashurashan. He has been monitoring Stormreach since before the downfall of the giants, reporting to the Council of Ashtakala. Purely an observer, he might provide assistance to other Lords of Dust who come to the region, but he rarely takes direct action. The fiend knows more

about Stormreach than virtually any other living creature, having been watching the area in various forms for over fifty thousand years; though he rarely shares his knowledge with adventurers, he could be a valuable ally or deadly foe.

Any of the Coin Lords could fill this role, and the fiend plays out the political games attributed to his surface identity for his own amusement. As Kirris Sel Shadra, the rakshasa would take great pleasure in moving the pawns of the underworld. In any case, the fiend is an expert in long-term infiltration, and uses the *cloak of Khyber* spell (page 59) to avoid detection.

The Seeker (LE expert 5/adept 2) has a deep fascination with the Blood of Vol. She has delved into the mysteries of the Divinity Within and learned to touch the magic of the Blood. She is enthralled by the legends of the Queen of the Dead and has strong sympathy for the Order of the Emerald Claw. She keeps her faith secret from strangers, and she doesn't attend the services in Grindstone. But she stays in touch with the priests of the Blood and the knights of the Emerald Claw who pass through the city and provides what assistance she can. Any of the lords could fill this role. Paulo Omaren sees the Blood as another path to the power long denied to her family. Yorrick Amanatu's ancestors brought the faith with them from the Lhazaar Principalities, where Vol lies hidden in Farlnen. Kirris Sel Shadra learned of the Blood from her subjects in Grindstone. In time, the Seeker might gain greater power; at the DM's discretion, she could be a cleric or a favored soul (*Complete Divine*) instead of an adept.

The Quori Spy (LE expert 2/telepath 8) is an agent of the Dreaming Dark, *mind seeded* long ago by the dominator Tirashana. He's not the first; every Storm Lord in his line has been subverted by Tirashana, and his heir apparent has likely already been seeded. The goals of the Dreaming Dark are mysterious, and the quori spy might behave in exactly the manner described for his surface identity. However, the spy has additional goals, specifically gathering information about the quori-giant conflict and preventing any kalashtar from doing the same. The spy tries to avoid direct actions that could threaten his cover, but might employ adventurers to achieve his goals.

If the quori spy is human—Omaren or Lassite—he can allow himself to be possessed by a tsucora quori (ECS 296). While possessed, he has access to additional skills and psi-like abilities.

a day when the Iron Watch and House Deneith will sweep aside the Stormreach Guard and crown her the sole ruler of Stormreach. These dreams might never come to pass; despite his genuine affection for her, Lord Greigur has to balance his duties to his house and his own ambitions. But Lady Paulo's alliance with him gives her hope for the future, and for now that's all she needs.

Whatever comes of her current schemes, there is no question that Lady Paulo is the most ambitious Storm Lord and that she is always looking for new sources of power. If a group of adventurers gains a reputation in Stormreach, there's an excellent chance that Lady Paulo will seek out their services. The only question is whether she employs them openly—like the Iron Watch—or seeks their assistance with more secret matters.

Lady Paulo isn't the oldest member of her family. The Omarens have an unusual tradition dating back to their buccaneer heritage: Leadership is held through force of arms, and any heir of the family can challenge the current lord to a duel to claim the title. Such duels are uncommon, since the best warriors of the house have no interest in administration. However, this tradition means that the Omaren lords have to be skilled in two arenas, and if an Omaren lord wants to rule until an old age, he or she might have to use trickery to deal with young challengers.

THE SEL SHADRAS

Race: Gnome.

Founder: Kolis Sel Shadra.

Current Leader: Kirris Sel Shadra.

Primary Spheres of Influence: Crime and punishment.

Family Businesses: Magistrates, the Quickfoot Gang.

Districts: Oldgate, Southwatch.

Allies: House Thuranni, the Hollow Shards.

Enemies: Independent criminals, the Swords of Karrn.

The Sel Shadras of Zilargo were known to be smugglers, but there were always rumors that they were behind some of the unsolved mysteries of the Thunder Sea. Some said that the sea's ghost ships and demon pirates were gnome illusions, cleverly woven by Sel Shadra bards. True or not, the Sel Shadras encouraged the rumors and benefited from the reputation. Although their smuggling operation wasn't as large as that of the Lassites, the gnomes possessed a great treasure: a handful of sails with air elementals woven into the cloth, granting them favorable winds and the ability to match the speed of Lyrandar galleons. The family still owns these sails, and many believe that the Sel Shadras never stopped their smuggling—they simply reduced the scale to avoid detection by Galifar.

The Sel Shadras were never as beloved as the Lassites, but the gnomes had connections across many pirate crews and were masters of finance and criminal strategy. According to the Stormreach Compact, the Sel Shadras are responsible for the administration of justice; however, it's an open secret that they also oversee crime. The original Storm Lords knew what sort of city they were building, and they knew that they needed someone to watch the underworld. A typical thug might never realize that his boss is tithing a percentage of profits to Lady Kirris, "the Spider of Stormreach," and that's how she likes it. She is a grandmaster playing with many pieces. She can influence the prices that fences and brothels charge. She knows smugglers' timetables and the goods they're carrying. She knows which gangs are fighting, and by pulling a few strings, she can redirect those conflicts. Lady Kirris is the queen of crime in Stormreach, and she works from the deepest shadows. The gang leaders know better than to cross her, and few ever know her true agenda.

The Sel Shadras monitor crime, and they also determine punishment. The Sel Shadras are the magistrates of the city, capable of administering summary judgment on anyone brought in by the Stormreach

CLOAK OF KHYBER

Illusion

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: One day/level

The rakshasa, masters of deception, have developed this spell to enhance their powers of disguise.

A *cloak of Khyber* conceals the caster's alignment from any form of divination. More important, it

shields a shapechanged or magically disguised creature from *true seeing*, causing the disguise to appear to be the caster's true form. However, this power has one significant restriction: The disguise must be maintained for 6 hours before the power of the cloak takes effect. As such, it is an extremely useful spell for a deep cover agent who rarely shifts his shape—but it is useless to a character casting a *disguise self* spell that only lasts for a few minutes.

Arcane Focus: A small Khyber dragonshard, worth 50 gp. If this object is ever taken more than 1 foot away from the subject, the spell immediately ends.

Guard. Over the years, Lady Kirris has formed an alliance with the Blood Council of the Red Ring, and violent criminals are sent to the ring in exchange for a share of the profits from their fights. Lady Kirris has also established a working relationship with House Thuranni. Lady Miravella d'Thuranni has her own interests in Stormreach and largely wants to be left alone. Lady Kirris keeps both criminals and the Stormreach Guard out of Lady Miravella's way; if anyone is foolish enough to cause trouble for Thuranni, the Sel Shadras help hide the bodies. In exchange, the Sel Shadras gain access to the special services of House Thuranni. When the justice system proves ill suited to her needs, Lady Kirris can call in bloodbound gladiators or Thuranni assassins; as a result, few people cross her.

If adventurers cause a major upset in the underworld by destroying entire gangs or businesses, they're likely to draw Lady Kirris's attention. An adventurer who shines at subterfuge might receive an offer to work for the Spider of Stormreach. Otherwise, Lady Kirris maintains the lowest profile of all the Storm Lords: always watching, rarely seen.

THE WYLKESES

Race: Human and half-elf.

Founder: Jolan Wylkes.

Current Leader: Jonas Wylkes.

Primary Sphere of Influence: Shipping.

Family Business: The docks and tariffs in the harbor.

District: Harbor.

Allies: House Lyrandar, the Golden Lions, the Aurum.

Enemy: Yorrick Amanatu.

The inclusion of the Wylkes family among the Storm Lords was a concession to Galifar. As a sorcerer and sailor, Jolan Wylkes spent more time as a privateer than he did as a pirate, and the king of Galifar wanted someone he could trust to see that the Storm Lords lived up to their promises. Although many in the city despised Jolan Wylkes, they respected his prowess at sea and the talents of the Wylkes shipwrights. It was clear that Jolan's presence was a necessary evil. He was made the fifth Storm Lord, but he was not a lord of the city. In a compromise between the demands of Galifar and the distaste that the others felt for Wylkes, he was declared the Harbor Lord—the gatekeeper of the city but always on the outside.

Despite this disdain, the Harbor Lord wielded considerable power. Stormreach was a city based on sea trade, and he held the keys, controlling the city's docks. By the terms of the compact, the Wylkes family has the right to levy docking fees and other tariffs, and the family prospered. This power was vested in a series of capable lords, clever men who knew how to squeeze every coin out of their holdings. Over the years, the Harbor Lords fought off the machinations of the

jealous Coin Lords and won vital concessions from dragonmarked houses and foreign nations alike.

And then disaster struck.

The death of Graden Wylkes, the previous Harbor Lord, remains a mystery. The Wylkes family takes great precautions to protect against poisoning and other forms of assassination, and it's possible that Graden simply died of a heart attack. But most assume that someone managed to have him killed, and these suspicions are fueled by the incompetence of his successor. Harbor Lord Jonas Wylkes (CN male half-elf aristocrat 3/sorcerer 3) is the least effective individual—and the youngest—to ever hold the office. Graden always believed his son would grow out of his youthful indolence, and perhaps he would have, in time. But responsibility has been thrust upon him too soon. Lord Jonas has close ties to the Golden Lions (page 72); only a few years ago, he was an active member of this gang. Now he is a socialite, spending more time at Shadows or the Red Ring than he does on his familial duties. He is easily distracted by decadent pleasures. In the meantime, the edifice carefully built by his predecessors is beginning to crumble. House Lyrandar is already working on renegotiating its arrangements with the city, and others are following suit. The Aurum has extended an invitation to young Jonas, though this is hardly public knowledge. Both have offered to help him manage the family business, each hoping to turn the Harbor Lord's domain into an extension of its own organization. For the moment, the indecisive lord is stalling on any firm alliance, but he is swiftly becoming overwhelmed by the insistent proposals.

Sorcery is strong in the Wylkes bloodline, and family tradition holds that the lordship passes to the oldest male sorcerer. Lord Jonas's mother, Tulea Wylkes (N female half-elf aristocrat 2), is horrified by what has become of her family, but she cannot bring herself to turn on her son. And the next suitable heir is a boy of sixteen. Tulea might ask adventurers to help straighten out her son. She could manipulate the characters into a conflict with House Lyrandar or the Aurum, drawing their attention elsewhere. Or she might ask them to help arrange an "accident" for Lord Jonas.

FOREIGN POWERS

Stormreach is an isolated city on a dangerous and savage frontier. During the Last War, few nations felt a need to devote resources to the city. Only three nations have official representatives in Stormreach: Aerenal, Breland, and Riedra. The influence of the Five Nations can be felt in Whitewash, Embers, Grindstone, and Dannel's Pride, but the most influential members of these communities are religious leaders, respected artists, and militia commanders, not authorized ambassadors.

AERENAL

The Aereni prefer to avoid the chaos of Stormreach whenever possible. The elf presence is based in a large densewood building in the Harbor district, near the wall shared with the Graystone ward. A leafy livewood sign bears the image of a golden mask above a fountain, along with the name Thaendyr's Rest.

The Rest combines the functions of temple, inn, and consulate. Rooms in the inn provide sparse but functional lodging; for a mere 8 cp per night, an Aereni traveler can get a bunk in one of the dormitory rooms and a simple, healthy meal. Thaendyr's Rest has one private room with four beds, which is reserved for traveling sages; however, if it is available, PCs can rent it for 2 gp per night.

A shrine to the Undying Court occupies a room in the back of the first floor. The priest Maeran Mendyrian (LN male elf adept 8/expert 1) leads religious services and also acts as the de facto ambassador for Aerenal in Stormreach. Maeran is nearly three hundred years old, and he has been serving in Stormreach for over fifty years. He is well versed in the politics of the city and can be a valuable ally for an adventurer. However, he helps only Aereni, and even then only if their actions are in the interests of the Undying Court.

Thaera (LN female elf expert 3/wizard 3) is the current keeper of Thaendyr's Rest. An elf of the line of Daelys, she has served at the Rest since she was thirty years old; now, at the age of 140, she has taken the helm. Having spent much of her life in Stormreach, she is more comfortable in the city than most of her kin. She devotes most of her life to the business of the Aereni, but she also finds the time to mingle with the people of Stormreach and might attend feasts or festivals. Since Maeran rarely leaves the Rest, a chance encounter with Thaera is the best opportunity for non-Aereni adventurers to obtain an invitation into the Rest.

Under normal circumstances, only Aereni (and their companions) are allowed into Thaendyr's Rest. This policy is enforced by the inn's guardian, Chyn Mendyrian (LG male undying soldier urban ranger^{UA} 8) and his animal companion, a mandrill (baboon) named Faith. One of the few undying soldiers stationed beyond Aerenal, Chyn is an object of reverence for the local Aereni. His presence is a sign of the difficulties the elves have had to overcome in the past, and daily services are held in the local shrine to sustain his deathless existence. Chyn rarely leaves the Rest unless he is tracking someone who has harmed one of the Aereni, but most of the Harbor thugs know the hideous warrior by reputation and leave the Aereni alone.

Adventure Hooks

- One of the Stillborn (ECS 218) wants to decipher the methods being used to preserve Chyn while he's so

far from Aerenal. The guardian of the Rest is kidnapped, and Maeran charges an Aereni adventurer to find the honored ancestor before his life force can be corrupted.

- Thaera approaches the adventurers when they are planning an expedition. The area they plan to pass through has an important role in the history of the line of Daelys, and she wishes to send Chyn with them to search for family relics.
- Maeran Mendyrian calls an Aereni adventurer to the Rest. It seems that the Shrouds (page 72) are indeed the vanguard of an undead army lurking beneath the surface, and after decades of work, they are on the verge of completing an eldritch machine. There's no time for Maeran to summon the Deathguard, and the machine cannot be allowed to activate or to fall into untrustworthy hands. Can the adventurers defeat these ancient ghosts?

BRELAND

When Stormreach was founded, the king of Galifar established a consulate in the city. But as the age of piracy came to an end and Galifar turned its attention elsewhere, the consulate became a position with no true power. In 894 YK, the Brelish consul of Stormreach was a lord named Kainen ir'Randek. When word reached Stormreach that Jarot was dead and that Wroann was defying her sister Mishann, Kainen was quick to act. Gathering the Brelish and supplementing his forces with Deneith mercenaries, he laid claim to the consulate. Neither Kainen nor his successors ever managed to sway the Storm Lords to choose a side in the war, and none of the other Five Nations bothered to establish embassies in Stormreach.

Breland has maintained a consulate in Cross for decades but has had little influence. The consul serves at the pleasure of the Brelish parliament, and the post is currently held by Lady Rusila ir'Clarn (NE female human aristocrat 2/bard 1). She has no real authority in the city, but Lady Rusila has many friends among the Stormreach elite. She goes out of her way to support political dissidents exiled from other nations and to show sympathy for Cyran refugees. Along each step of the way, she has sown doubts about the efficiency of the Wynarn family—the kings and queens whose flawed rule paved the way for the Last War. Lady Rusila is a supporter of the Brelish movement that hopes to replace the monarchy after King Boranel's death (ECS 145), and as this turn of events comes closer to reality, the movement might use Stormreach as a base of operations.

Lady Rusila has a keen eye for opportunity, and if she sees any gain for herself or her cause, she might help her fellow Brelish. She can provide emergency medical treatment using a *wand of cure moderate wounds*, but her connections are far more useful. If the PCs accept aid from Rusila, they'll owe her a favor.

Rusila ir'Clarn is a Brelish woman in her early thirties. She has long, dark hair; pale skin; and large violet eyes, which suggest elf or half-elf blood. Her voice is deep and smoky; she's an accomplished singer with music from goblin dirges to Brelish ballads. Lady Rusila has a warm demeanor, but behind this mask she is ruthless and cunning, willing to use poison, assassination, or any other means to accomplish her goals.

Adventure Hooks

- Lady Rusila ir'Clarn likes to move among the common people, and the party might encounter her singing in a tavern or discussing the Last War with former soldiers. Members of Dannel's Wrath (page 75) attempt to kidnap her; if the adventurers intercede, they earn her favor.
- Members of the Swords of Liberty (FN 55) have come to Stormreach. Lady Rusila wants to eliminate this cell before it can cast a bad light on the antimonarchy movement, but she can't risk publicly opposing the Swords. If possible, she urges the player characters to eliminate this threat; otherwise, the party might be caught in the middle of a struggle between the Brelish factions.

RIEDRA

The Riedran city of Dar Qat was established centuries before Stormreach. Initially it dwarfed the smuggler outpost, but Dar Qat remained stable while Stormreach grew. For many years, the Riedrans simply ignored their neighbors to the north. Expeditions that arrived at the walls of Dar Qat were met with silence and closed gates.

As the Last War spread across Khorvaire, the Inspired extended a friendly hand to the Five Nations and the people of Stormreach. An Inspired envoy arrived bearing gifts for the Storm Lords, asking that Riedran ships be allowed to dock and trade at Stormreach. Now the painted sails of Riedran ships are a lovely if infrequent sight in the harbor, and Riedran merchants trade textiles, dreamlily, crystal, and other goods for dragonshards and gold.

The Riedran consulate is located in the Harbor district, not far from the Wavecrest Tavern. Most Riedran sailors see Stormreach as proof of all the horrible stories about humans beyond Riedra and prefer to remain on their ships when in port. Merchants stay at the consulate for the minimum time required to transfer their goods; they leave the business of trading to the consul and his staff.

The Riedran consul is Lord Katanavash (LE male tsucora Inspired psion [seer] 9). Lord Katanavash can read objects and gaze into the past. He is studying Stormreach, using his powers to discover facts about the city's past. Like most Inspired ambassadors, he has no direct connection with the Dreaming Dark, and Dreaming Dark agents avoid any contact with him;

however, if it is truly necessary, he can provide support to Dreaming Dark operations.

Lord Katanavash is a handsome and charismatic man, but he prefers his visions of the past to the present and avoids social contact whenever possible. Nonetheless, he has developed a reputation as a charming mediator and shrewd merchant and has hosted a few gatherings over the years. His assistant and guardian Hope (LN female changeling rogue 5/monk 3) is primarily responsible for coordinating those events. (If *Races of Eberron* is available, Hope makes use of the changeling rogue substitution levels.) Hope has served the quori Avash all her life, and she is fanatically devoted to her master. She is a brilliant negotiator and often assumes Lord Katanavash's identity to deal with engagements he wishes to avoid. Only a dozen other people serve at the consulate—four guards, six servants, and two administrative assistants—and all of them are aware of this practice. They believe that Hope has been blessed by the consul and that in her next life she will be one of the Chosen hosts.

The Riedrans largely keep to themselves. There is growing tension between the Riedrans and the half-giants of Stormreach, many of whom are descended from the slaves of Dar Qat. Although the Riedrans have no interest in conflict, many among the Titans (page 73) believe that they should take vengeance on behalf of their ancestors.

Adventure Hooks

- Lord Katanavash often walks about the city incognito to make full use of *object reading* and *sensitivity to psychic impressions*. During one of his strolls, he passes by the party at precisely the moment he triggers an ancient trap set during the quori incursion. The adventurers and the ambassador are caught in an extradimensional deathtrap—can they use their combined skills to escape the deadly maze?
- When adventurers return from an expedition, Lord Katanavash contacts them and asks if he can use *object reading* on relics they have recovered. He is willing to pay them for this service (100 gp × average character level), or they can share in the knowledge he discovers.
- Any encounter with Lord Katanavash could turn out to be a meeting with Hope, who could become a rival or a romantic interest for a changeling PC.

AUNDAIR

Most of the Aundairian expatriates and immigrants in Stormreach live in the Whitewash ward of Oldgate. The nation has no official representative, but a few individuals are widely respected.

Duralt the Augur (N male gnome magewright 6) came with the first wave of settlers from Aundair, and he is considered to be the heart of Whitewash. In his

youth he sold his services as an augur in the Marketplace. These days he stays in Whitewash, living off his savings and donations from those who come to him for advice. He might perform an *augury* for anyone he takes a liking to, but his strong common sense can be just as useful as his mystical talents.

Margana Sooth (NG female human expert 3/magewright 1) is a painter and political dissident, banished from Aundair for criticizing the war. She is best known for her murals of Shadukar and the Crying Fields, and she is also an accomplished public speaker. Many of the people of Whitewash disagree with her harsh criticisms of Queen Aurala, but she has a number of followers, and even her critics respect her skill with words.

Jorian Thiel is the commander of the Ninth Wands (page 76). Even though he has only recently arrived in the city, many are impressed by the Aundairian soldiers and listen to what Jorian has to say.

CYRE

When Breland seized control of the Galifar consulate in 894 YK, some Cyrans wished to maintain their nation's ties to Stormreach. Queen Mishann was concerned with the war and had little interest in the matter, but she allowed Lord Traven ir'Thavar to settle in Stormreach with a band of merchants. There was no official consulate, but the Cyrans became an accepted part of the community. Following the Darguul conquest of southern Cyre, a wave of refugees crossed the Thunder Sea, seeking to escape the madness of war. Traven's son Taraval devoted his family's fortune to buying up property and creating homes for the refugees, and Dannel's Pride was born. Even then, the refugees were desperate, bitter folk, and the reputation of the Cyrans began to fade. Matters only became worse after the Day of Mourning. Since the disaster, the population of Dannel's Pride has skyrocketed with refugees seeking shelter. Most Stormreachers avoid Dannel's Pride and consider it to be a dangerous place.

The following people are respected within the ward.

Jalaine ir'Thavar (NG human aristocrat 2/expert 1) is the granddaughter of Traven ir'Thavar. Her father spent his wealth in establishing Dannel's Pride, and Jalaine shares her family's home with two dozen refugees. Even though she no longer has gold, she shares her grandfather's love of Cyre and is always searching for peaceful solutions to the problems of the refugees.

Fury is the leader of Dannel's Wrath (page 75). He moves through the ward in many guises, searching for those who might join the Wrath. The old Cyrans

despise his actions, but he is an almost mythic hero to the younger refugees.

Miraan (page 73) commands the Storm Hammers gang. She is more of a public figure than Fury, and though many think she's mad, those who follow her are staunchly loyal.

KARRNATH

The Karrnathi immigrants are concentrated in the Grindstone ward. Some families sought to escape the war. Others came when Kaius placed sanctions on the Emerald Claw and the Blood of Vol. Still others saw a challenge, believing that Karrnathi spirit could carve out success in this new world.

With the arrival of the Swords of Karrn, Grindstone has become almost a separate city within Stormreach. The people of Grindstone take pride in the order imposed by the Swords of Karrn; those who opposed the Swords found shelter in other districts. Influential people in the ward are described below.

Berrinessa is a priestess of the Blood of Vol (page 81). Her personal charisma and wisdom have earned her the respect of the community, even from those who don't share her faith.

Drago Thul is the commander of the Swords of Karrn (page 77). Though he is rarely seen in person, most residents of the district have a great deal of respect for Drago and his soldiers.

THRANE

The Thrane settlers who sought to preserve their culture largely settled in the Embers ward, close to the Temple district. Although the Silver Flame is the dominant faith of Embers, many of the inhabitants of the ward came to Stormreach because their beliefs were slightly out of line with official church doctrine; in Stormreach, they are free to follow their own paths. Many—both followers of the Flame and agnostics—share the belief that the church shouldn't have taken power from the Wynnarn line, and this belief has resulted in the local temple being officially severed from Flamekeep. Therefore, the people of Embers love their ancestral homeland but maintain no close ties between the ward and Khorvaire.

Valen Vanatar is the leader of the Knights of Thrane (page 75) and a popular figure among the Wynnarn loyalists.

Jirian Zayne (NG male half-elf adept 4/expert 3) is the senior minister at the Keep of the Silver Flame. Like his fellows, he has come to accept the variations in the faith of his flock, and he works to help all of them find the light. Jirian is kind and generous but frustrated by his inability to do more for the people of his ward.

DRAGONMARKED HOUSES

Each of the dragonmarked houses has an agenda, and that fact can lead to opportunities for adventure and intrigue. Some of the houses are only interested in catering to the inhabitants of Stormreach; others have plans that stretch across Xen'drik.

HOUSE CANNITH

Leader: Channa Vown d'Cannith (LE female human expert 1/artificer 6).

Other Notables: Toven d'Cannith (N male human aristocrat 1/wizard 9).

House Cannith has no true enclave in Stormreach, but the house maintains a small facility within the Citadel of the Twelve and has developed strong ties with the Stormreach Forge. Cannith's interest in Xen'drik has grown considerably over the last century because of the magical secrets that have been recovered from the interior; it's thought the breakthrough that produced the creation forge was the result of Aaren d'Cannith's travels in the depths of Xen'drik. The Cannith workshop in the Citadel of the Twelve isn't designed for production; it's built for research, focused on analyzing magic items and schemas recovered from the ruins of the shattered land.

The wizard Toven d'Cannith directed Cannith operations in Xen'drik for the last twenty years. However, in the wake of the Day of Mourning, Merrix d'Cannith assumed control of the house's southern operations. Merrix dispatched one of his personal protégés, an artificer named Channa of the Vown family, to take over the Stormreach facilities and replace the majority of the staff with people loyal to Cannith South. However, Toven d'Cannith holds an independent position within the Twelve and continues to work at the citadel in this capacity. Bitter tensions seethe in the citadel's shadows, further fueled by Toven's interest in the Blood of Vol and Channa's devotion to the Traveler.

Merrix has directed Channa to focus resources on the warforged, and Cannith expeditions are directed toward finding *docents*, warforged components, ancient creation forges, or anything else that could further Merrix's work in Sharn.

HOUSE DENEITH

Leader: Greigur d'Deneith (LE male human rogue 1/fighter 4/Deneith warden^{Dra} 5).

Other Notables: Captain Birne (LE male human barbarian 1/fighter 4/occult slayer^{CW} 2), Bereschel d'Deneith (LN female human aristocrat 1/fighter 2).

Mere mention of the name "Greigur" on certain streets in Stormreach elicits either a sharp turn of the head or a suspicious furrowing of the brow from those nearby—and for good reason. Greigur, a member

of the feared Sentinel Marshals, is the head of the House Deneith enclave and one of the most powerful men in Stormreach. A Karrnathi transplant, he is a grizzled veteran of the Last War who delights in the capricious nature of "justice" in his adopted home. When a dangerous criminal is on the loose, the Storm Lords eventually come to Greigur, since they know that he *will* find the fugitive. What becomes of the fugitive will doubtless prove a lesson to others—all of which serves to make the city that much more secure.

Stormreach lies outside the purview of the Korth Edicts, and this fact gives Greigur's operation an edge that other Deneith enclaves cannot match. With the bevy of religious and cultural tensions aflame in the city, only the longtime residents dare to entrust the security of their homes and businesses to the city guard, many of whom are former criminals. House Deneith therefore does a booming business in Stormreach, with the finer houses, shops, and almost every building in the Temple district paying out to Greigur for regular security assistance. Some whisper that Greigur, with all his military might, must aim to wrest control of the city from the Storm Lords someday, but such speculation is idle. Greigur is perfectly content to play both neutral party and dutiful house member, all the while amassing greater and greater wealth and—much more important—*fear* from the city's residents.

Greigur's tough exterior has one chink: He is in love, or the closest thing to love a man like him can hope to feel. Most of the city's power players are aware that Lady Paulo Omaren, the Coin Lord who oversees Forgelight, is "in bed" with Greigur d'Deneith, but few suspect that this is the literal truth. The two recently began a clandestine affair, one that has resulted in the unforeseen development of genuine affection in Greigur's cold heart.

As a result of this distraction, Greigur leaves much of the day-to-day operation to his right-hand man, Captain Birne, a former savage whom Greigur rescued from barbarism and raised like an adopted son. Sharing Birne's distrust of magic and those who wield it, Greigur encouraged Birne's studies and training specifically in that regard and now takes pride in how potent an adversary for spellcasters his protégé has become. Birne, a mountain of a man who stands almost seven feet in height, is fiercely loyal to Greigur and can often be seen standing off to one side of his lord, leaning menacingly on the hilt of his masterwork two-handed sword.

HOUSE GHALLANDA

Leader: Sorala d'Ghallanda (NG female halfling expert 9).

Other Notables: Heren d'Ghallanda (CG male halfling bard 5).

House Ghallanda has its seat in the Chapterhouse in the Marketplace, the largest inn in Stormreach. What the Chapterhouse lacks in local flavor it makes up for with its reliability, reasonable rates, and excellent entertainment. In addition, many of the inns and taverns in the city are licensed by House Ghallanda, giving them the right to show the house's seal of approval on their trade signs. It's up to the DM to decide which businesses pay dues to Ghallanda; if a tavern doesn't have the Ghallanda seal, that fact should be a warning to potential customers.

Sorala d'Ghallanda manages the Chapterhouse and Ghallanda interests in the city. She is an exceptional cook and tries to find some time each week to work her magic in the kitchen. She's a kind woman and excellent listener, and many people talk to her about their troubles. If adventurers befriend Sorala, she might be able to provide them with crucial information—though she'll only betray a confidence if she believes it's in the best interests of everyone involved.

Heren d'Ghallanda is a bard trained in the songs and drumming techniques of the Talenta Plains. He's often found performing at the Chapterhouse, but he has another role in Stormreach. Using his *hat of disguise*, he spends a lot of his time monitoring businesses licensed by Ghallanda, making sure that they are living up to the standards of the house. He has developed a number of undercover identities, in addition to making up new disguises on the spur of the moment. Over the course of his work, he hears many things; like Sorala, he could be an excellent source of information if someone earns his trust.

HOUSE JORASCO

Leader: Iriakan d'Jorasco (NG male halfling barbarian 1/expert 6).

Other Notables: Alhaura d'Jorasco (LN female halfling cleric 9).

The Jorasco enclave in Respite always has a steady stream of clients. Stormreach is a dangerous city, and whether it's magical mending or mundane treatment, there's always work for healers. The enclave is well supplied for such a small city, including an *altar of resurrection*, the cleric Alhaura, and three adepts of 7th–9th level, along with a number of experts trained in healing.

Alhaura and her adepts don't follow any of the major religions of Eberron; their faith is an abstract devotion to the principles of life and health, a path common within Jorasco. Followers of this path have access to the Life and Healing domains, and NPCs of this path can prepare only abjurations, divinations, and spells with the healing descriptor. A DM using *Miniatures Handbook* might wish to make Alhaura a healer instead of a cleric.

In the past, Jorasco has been content with its revenue stream and has made few efforts to expand its

influence in the city. However, the new viceroy Iriakan is more adventurous than his predecessors, and he is determined to expand Jorasco's role.

HOUSE KUNDARAK

Leader: Korbek Ghedin d'Kundarak (see page 148).

Other Notables: Denza Ghedin d'Kundarak (N female dwarf rogue 5/silver key^{Dra} 3), Yarik Ghedin d'Kundarak (N male dwarf fighter 5/stonelord^{CW} 3).

Strong cases can be made for both House Deneith and House Tharashk, but the distinction of the most powerful dragonmarked house in Stormreach must likely fall to House Kundarak. The dwarves were among the first of the dragonmarked to arrive in force, and they have done very well for themselves ever since. They were the first to recognize the potential inherent in establishing an enclave in an area outside the purview of the Korth Edicts. Stormreach proved the ideal environment for a house that specializes in banking and securities, since the demand for both is high in Xen'drik.

Beyond this, two things stand out as being most responsible for House Kundarak's success. The first is its long-standing alliance with Yorrick Amanatu, the Storm Lord who oversees Silverwall. A fellow dwarf and one of the wealthiest people in Xen'drik, Amanatu has acted in the house's interests at almost every step of the way, especially during the negotiations that paved the way for House Kundarak's greatest victory in the city: the establishment of Coasthold. Unlike the other dragonmarked house enclaves in the city, the dwarves actually own the land on which their enclave sits. With help from their cousin Yorrick, they successfully convinced the city to let them buy and build on the undeveloped land on the eastern edge of town. They made a number of concessions in the process (agreeing to host the Citadel of the Twelve, for example), but the deal ultimately benefits them. The house's presence provides substantial revenue to the city and to Yorrick in particular, and in the final analysis, House Kundarak acts almost completely independent of the city's authority.

These successes are largely the work of the Ghedin bloodline, a family that suffers some measure of ignominy back in Khorvaire thanks to the dominance of the Kundarak line there. The head of the Stormreach enclave is Korbek Ghedin, the nephew of Lord Durdik Ghedin, the current patriarch of the Ghedin clan worldwide. A thoughtful and quiet person, Korbek is one of the most influential individuals in Stormreach, but one would never know it by his behavior. He runs a tight ship and clearly sees a line of demarcation between his house and those outside it, despite his willingness to serve all who call on its services. Publicly, he is known for being nearly humorless when it comes to the security of his enclave, and rumors of would-be interlopers disappearing without a trace



The Kraken has a way of dealing with his rivals

circle throughout the city. Korbek is almost never encountered without Yarik, a hulking brick of a dwarf clad in mithral plate. Nobody knows just what Yarik's title or role is (aside from guarding Korbek), but some dwarves whisper of his connection to House Kundarak's paramilitary arm, the Ghorad'din.

For more on the secrets of House Kundarak, see page 148.

HOUSE LYRANDAR

Leader: Calynden d'Lyrandar (NE male half-elf aristocrat 7/dragonmark heir 5).

Other Notables: Lazrea d'Lyrandar (CG female half-elf swashbuckler^{CW} 3/expert 3).

Stormreach is a center for sea trade and a port that lies outside the restrictive Korth Edicts imposed by Galifar. House Lyrandar has always seen tremendous opportunity in Stormreach, but its ambitions were held in check by the Harbor Lords. Despite being fellow half-elves, the Wylkeses obeyed the orders of the

king of Galifar and placed limits on Lyrandar expansion. But over the last thirty years, everything has changed. With the development of the airship, Lyrandar raised Falconer's Spire in the Marketplace. Lord Lassite is open to Lyrandar persuasion, and the house uses the spire as its embassy and seat of business.

The next shift came with the arrival of Calynden d'Lyrandar at the end of the Last War. In the past, Calynden served as a seneschal of Lyrandar. Some say that Matriarch Esravash sent Calynden to Stormreach because she disliked the old man's cruel and calculating ways; others believe that Esravash is more cunning than she appears and that she sent Calynden to extend her domain. Within Lyrandar, Calynden is known as "the Kraken" because he is deadly and powerful but never seen until he strikes. A masterful negotiator, Calynden specialized in weather extortion during his time in Khorvaire—bargaining with generals or farmers at times when the weather played a vital role, offering Lyrandar's assurance that the weather would go their way—with the clear implication that it could be made otherwise. It's possible that he is continuing this practice in Stormreach; someone who can control the weather is a powerful force in a port city.

Whether the assignment was intended as punishment or opportunity, many significant events have occurred since Calynden's arrival. Foremost among these is the mysterious death of Harbor Lord Graden Wylkes and the ascension of his son Jonas. The new Harbor Lord is far more pliable than his predecessor. Calynden showered young Jonas with gifts and galas, and in the process renegotiated the arrangements made with prior lords. Having finally secured the rights to the eastern peninsula, Lyrandar is in the process of building its own shipyard. Once complete, this facility could allow Lyrandar a level of freedom unprecedented under the Korth Edicts. Calynden also hopes to wrest the secrets of elemental binding from the depths of Xen'drik to build new galleons without relying on Cannith or Zilargo; however, this plan is only a dream at present.

Many Lyrandar vessels pass through Stormreach, and any heir in good standing can find simple lodging at the enclave. One of the most recognized captains is Lazrea d'Lyrandar, known both for her beauty and her love of dueling with those who offend her. Lord Calynden has been using her to manipulate Jonas Wylkes, and so far Lazrea has no objections to romancing the handsome Harbor Lord. However, if she discovers proof that Calynden was behind the death of Graden Wylkes, she could turn against him. Like many of the children of Lyrandar, Lazrea is a free spirit. If it turns out that the Kraken has dark plans, Lazrea could be a valuable ally to the PCs.

House Lyrandar has two strong allies in Stormreach. The first is House Tharashk, which relies on Lyrandar shipping to transport its dragonshards and

other goods to Khorvaire. Also, Lyrandar has spent decades cultivating relations with the sahuagin in order to ensure safe passage across the Thunder Sea. Sahuagin emissaries are often seen in the house's harbor facilities, and Calynden frequently dines with sahuagin priests, conversing with them in their own tongue. Most likely, this alliance is simply a matter of business—something that gives Lyrandar an edge over independent captains. However, some in the house say that Calynden is one of the leaders of the Storm Front, a cult that ascribes the powers of the Mark of Storm to the Devourer and that advocates the conquest of Khorvaire. If this belief is true, Calynden's hospitality might hide a dark purpose.

HOUSE MEDANI

Notables: Culan Silvereyes (N male half-elf expert 4).

House Medani has little interest in Stormreach. The house has a single apartment in the Citadel of the Twelve, and now and again the house sends a representative to the citadel to observe events in the city. Typically, Medani heirs found in the city are either on direct assignment from Khorvaire, or else they're free agents pursuing their own agendas.

Although no Medani true heirs are in permanent residence, one man in Stormreach has the Mark of Detection. Culan Silvereyes is an expatriate, expelled from the house after he knowingly withheld information that caused the death of his employer. He is driven by oracular visions (or so he believes), and these might cause him to seek out adventurers or act against them. Most of the time he works as a freelance inquisitive, with a knack for showing up at the moment when a prospective client decides to seek help.

HOUSE ORIEN

Leader: Uskal d'Orien (NG male human expert 4).

Other Notables: Rain d'Orien (N female human ranger 5/blade of Orien^{Dra} 3).

Xen'drik lacks both lightning rails and major trade routes. Orien's major financial interest in Stormreach lies in arranging teleportation between the city and Khorvaire. Few travelers have the funds to afford such a trip (5,000 gp one way to Korth, Sharn, Passage, Korranberg, Fairhaven, or Flamekeep), but when the need for speed and security outweigh any question of cost, House Orien is there to answer the call.

The house operates out of quarters in the Citadel of the Twelve, under the capable hand of Uskal d'Orien. Uskal plays many roles; he makes reservations for travelers, sees to the needs of Transportation Guild members when they are in Stormreach, and represents Orien in diplomatic affairs. Though the years are taking their toll on him, Uskal is a jovial and energetic man, with streaks of red remaining in his white beard and smile lines worn into his

cheeks. Uskal has no dragonmark, but he is a capable administrator.

In addition to his work as a travel agent, Uskal oversees four members of the Couriers Guild. Three of them make deliveries only within the city. Rain d'Orien is the exception. Orien has a reputation to uphold, and when deliveries must be made to Last Chance, Zantashk, or dig sites, those in need call on Rain. In addition to her own impressive talents, Rain has made a few contacts among the drow and the giants. But when she's heading into unknown territory, Uskal hires guards to ensure that the delivery is completed. Deneith or Tharashk mercenaries serve, but if an adventurer of Orien blood is around, Uskal always prefers to work within the house.

At least once every three days, an Orien heir who has the Siberys Mark of Passage teleports to Stormreach from Khorvaire. The Transportation Guild charges 5,000 gp for people to travel with an heir through use of the Siberys mark's *greater teleport* ability. Even if there are no customers ready to be teleported to Khorvaire, the heirs teleport to Stormreach with messages and packages for the Couriers Guild. The Siberys heirs can also arrive in response to contracts from Khorvaire, so there's always a chance an heir will be in residence at the citadel. However, unless would-be travelers make reservations with Uskal (requiring a 10% nonrefundable deposit), they discover that the heir's services have already been booked.

Currently, three heirs run the Xen'drik teleportation circuit: Elari (NG expert 12/heir of Siberys 3), a young prodigy who enjoys talking with travelers about their journeys; Breyn (N rogue 4/expert 8/heir of Siberys 3), a house veteran who rescued a handful of nobles in the Last War and who is not above accepting smugglers' gold; and Dekker, who is not actually an heir of Siberys but a rakshasa named Marishantar (LE rakshasa sorcerer 9). This fiend sports a bogus Siberys mark and uses the Silent Spell feat to conceal that it casts *greater teleport* rather than using the mark. Marishantar is a servant of Sul Khatesh, a rajah bound beneath Aundair; this overlord has a number of followers hidden in House Orien and across Aundair. Marishantar has no direct ties to other rakshasas in Stormreach. It serves the interests of Sul Khatesh and has no need to manipulate the Storm Lords or delve into the city's mysteries. As a supposed heir of Siberys in the Transportation Guild, Marishantar has access to Khorvaire's rich and powerful, and over the course of centuries, it has used its skills and spells to draw knowledge from its clients and to plant ideas.

HOUSE PHIALAN

Leader: Morian Shol d'Phiarlan (N male elf expert 6/illusionist 3).

Other Notables: Eiras Tialaen d'Phiarlan (N male elf bard 8), Zarzalia Shol d'Phiarlan (NG female elf bard 5/dragonmark heir 1).

House Phiarlan has an economic interest in the Chapterhouse in the Marketplace, but it maintains a separate enclave in the Temple district. There, Viceroy Morian Shol d'Phiarlan arranges entertainment for the taverns, inns, and theaters in the city. Although the Serpentine Table—Phiarlan's espionage division—has operatives scattered in the city, Morian deals in the arts, not in intelligence. The eyes of the house study anyone who comes in search of secret services; if the job is worthwhile and the resources are available, a Phiarlan agent approaches the prospective client to discuss the deal. Morian doesn't even know the identity of the Serpentine spymaster, though he's certain that this agent works out of the Onyx Fountain (page 24).

Phiarlan heirs can always find lodging at the enclave, provided they are willing to perform for a few hours or share interesting news from the wider world. One frequent guest is Eiras Tialaen, a bard who has devoted his life to recovering lost artistic traditions of the ancient elves from the depths of Xen'drik. Tialaen was scarred in an accident in the jungles, but he hides his disfigurement beneath a layer of illusion. The bard could be a useful patron or ally for explorers, or a rival; a PC might want a magic item for its power, while Tialaen wants the relic for its artistry.

HOUSE SIVIS

Leader: Amilene Santor d'Sivis (LN female gnome expert 2/wizard 7).

Other Notables: Wernor Lyrriman d'Sivis (NG male gnome expert 5/wizard 1).

House Sivis runs one of the smallest operations of any dragonmarked house in Stormreach, but that's not to say that it has no presence, thanks in large part to the efforts of its ever-approachable leader, First Stonespeaker Amilene Santor. The Sivis gnomes maintain no enclave per se in the city, but they have a space of their own outside the offices of the Citadel of the Twelve. Thanks to good relations with the dwarves, House Sivis keeps private offices inside the Kundarak enclave. These offices contain a message station (with two active *speaking stones*), the First Stonespeaker's private office, and a small but valuable arcane library of which she is especially proud and the maintenance of which she oversees personally.

Most business of a mundane nature is conducted next door at the Sivis offices in the Citadel of the Twelve, where the local Notaries Guild is headquartered. Legal services there are overseen by barrister Wernor Lyrriman, an elderly but experienced attorney who specialized in international law in his youth and who is today the leading expert on the bureaucratic system of the Storm Lords (especially as it pertains to the workings of the dragonmarked houses).

Although the Hidden Word is technically a branch of the Notaries Guild, First Stonespeaker Santor keeps a tight rein on magical services, and all subordinates

must consult her before providing magic such as *secret page* or *illusory script* to those outside the house. (This stricture is rarely an issue, since only one other person in Stormreach is capable of casting such potent magic on behalf of House Sivis.) Amilene rarely leaves the confines of Coasthold, but she has garnered a city-wide reputation for being cordial and approachable in her space, and she enjoys being a neutral party in Stormreach.

HOUSE THARASHK

Leader: Kurn d'Velderan (N male human expert 5/dragonmark heir 3).

Other Notables: Durgran'Torrn (NG male orc barbarian 4/expert 3), Shurya d'Velderan (N female human rogue 3/master inquisitive 5).

Most people think of Tharashk as a house of inquisitives and bounty hunters, its members using their marks to solve mysteries and track criminals. But the House of Finding makes far more money from prospecting than it does from its inquisitives, and over the last two centuries, Tharashk has taken the lead in exploiting the hidden resources of Xen'drik. Tharashk has established a number of mining camps beyond Stormreach. Dragonshards are the common quarry, but Tharashk miners also sell iron ore and other precious metals to the Stormreach Forge. It's dangerous working a mine in Xen'drik, and many a crew has disappeared without a trace. But the money is good, and the flow of goods from Xen'drik has helped the young house prosper over the last century.

Within Stormreach, House Tharashk dominates the Graystone ward in Cross. Even though a steady stream of traffic passes from the Harbor district to the Marketplace, the ward itself is almost entirely dedicated to House Tharashk. The massive refinery is one of the largest employers in Stormreach, processing shipments of dragonshards and other goods brought up the Koronoo River. Many of the refinery workers are unmarked members of House Tharashk, but the refinery also employs locals and immigrants from the Shadow Marches, providing lodging in dormitories in Graystone itself; most of the one thousand orcs and half-orcs found in Stormreach live in Graystone. Thanks to canteens spread around the dormitories, workers never need to leave the ward; however, many enjoy drinking at the Harbor district taverns or watching the fights in the Red Ring, and things can get rowdy when a shift lets out at the refinery.

Viceroy Kurn d'Velderan makes his home in the Tharashk enclave. The enclave is also where people can go to hire inquisitives. Four bound Tharashk inquisitives work in Stormreach, and their services are often called on by those frustrated by the corruption within the Stormreach Guard. Shurya d'Velderan is the best of them, and her prices reflect her skill; at a base rate of 100 gp plus 50 gp per hour, only viceroys, Storm

Lords, or others among the wealthiest of Stormreach can typically afford her services.

Kurn d'Velderan is a busy man. He manages numerous mining camps and monitors activities within the city, which includes navigating diplomatic tightropes between the Storm Lords, dragonmarked houses, and other forces. He's working to strengthen the presence of the Dragonne's Roar, the division of the house that recruits mercenaries and laborers from the monstrous races. Under Kurn's watch, House Tharashk has developed ties with the hill giants and half-giants. To date, the drow have shown no interest in working with the house, but Kurn is always searching for new possibilities.

Kurn oversees the business of the house, but he doesn't have the time or skills to direct the refinery. This is the work of Durgran'Torrn, an orc whose good humor is almost as boundless as his strength. Durgran is a gifted warrior who deals with any troubles or brawls at the refinery. He has the respect of the workers, and has even represented the house in the Red Ring on occasion. Unknown to Kurn, Durgran is a devotee of the teachings of the Gatekeepers. Durgran is in Stormreach to watch for signs of darkness and rumors of a daelkyr at work below Xen'drik. He speaks the Giant tongue and often accompanies Kurn on his visits to the Tents of Rushemé. Durgran seeks out conversation with the giant workers at the refinery, and he is becoming quite knowledgeable about the myths and stories of Rushemé. If a PC is a Gatekeeper or member of House Tharashk, Kurn might provide assistance—especially if it interferes with the plans of the Cults of the Dragon Below.

HOUSE THURANNI

Leader: Lady Miravella Uruvai d'Thuranni (CN female elf necromancer 7/blood magus^{CAR} 4).

Other Notables: Vaedin Uruvai d'Thuranni (LE male elf soulknife^{EPH} 6/assassin 3), Jaye Uruvai d'Thuranni (N male elf rogue 3/ranger 2/shadow hunter^{Dra} 3).

Like Houses Medani and Orien, House Thuranni has no public presence in Stormreach aside from a sparsely staffed office in the Citadel of the Twelve. Unlike those houses, however, a substantial difference exists between the house's public presence and its private one. In truth, House Thuranni is a force to be reckoned with in Stormreach, having grown over a period of time and with the calculated precision that comes with the long-lived outlook of the elf race.

The strength of House Thuranni today is the strength of rewarded patience, the power of a long and systematic accumulation of knowledge. From Shadows, its



*House Tharashk has had some trouble
with its giant laborers*

brothel in Locksmith Square, Thuranni plays host to the wealthy and influential, visitors and locals alike. If a complete list of the place's clients were to become public knowledge, its contents might come as a shock even to the most hardened Stormreachers. Through the brothel's nighttime liaisons, the Thuranni "overhear" (read: extract) some of the deepest and darkest secrets and desires of their clients. Drunk on the finest spirits and their own passions, the citizens of Stormreach let slip things of which they would normally never speak. Most of the time, they leave having forgotten ever doing so, but even when they recall their indiscretions, they rest easy in the knowledge that the elves of House Thuranni won't misuse the information.

And they are right. The head of Thuranni in Stormreach, a powerful wizard named Lady Miravella, has more important matters on her mind. In order to attend to them, she requires the freedom and anonymity that neutrality and innocuousness provide. More important, she needs the city's wealthy and powerful—the Storm Lords and the other dragonmarked houses in particular—to realize that she knows as much as she does and yet still stays out of their affairs. This *détente* of sorts provides the very freedom that she and her family members require.

That is not to say that Lady Miravella shies away from the work for which her house is known; she accepts the occasional bid for assassination or other dirty work, but she chooses such jobs carefully and almost always turns down requests to rid the city of one of its most public or powerful figures. When she does take on such a job, she typically sends her nephew Vaedin, a gifted killer who never leaves a trace. Longtime residents have seen the results of his work, however, and he is among the most feared individuals in town, though few even know what he looks like. For internal security, she relies on her other nephew, Jaye, who is always on the lookout for the intrusive snoopings of House Phiarlan's Serpentine Table and its many agents.

HOUSE VADALIS

Leader: Tyris d'Vadalis (CN human male expert 2/druid 5).

Other Notables: Khepra d'Vadalis (CG human female expert 1/ranger 2/scout 1), Rhomas d'Vadalis (N male expert 1/ranger 1).

No dragonmarked house has a smaller presence in Stormreach than House Vadalis, but that situation is precisely how the local Vadalis head likes it. Where House Medani and House Orien distance themselves from affairs in Stormreach, House Vadalis is entirely absent from city politics, having no enclave within the city proper. This absence is a calculated artifice.

House Vadalis does have an enclave near Stormreach, but its location allows the local house members to maintain not only their policy of detachment, but their privacy and profitability as well. Near the coast north of the city stands House Vadalis's sprawling ranch, Blackbriar. Named for the curious plant that grows wild in the region, Blackbriar is easily the largest private holding of any dragonmarked house in Xen'drik. Few know just how large it is, since rumor holds that the fields of blackbriar plants encircling the ranch expand and contract at the housemaster's whim, but locals estimate its size at three hundred acres or more. According to the few who have been allowed to visit, the blackbriar grows higher and thicker the closer to the ranch one goes and is well over head-height when it breaks suddenly, revealing a dirt path that winds its way through rolling grassy hills toward a central manor and several outbuildings. A house member greets would-be visitors near the road from Stormreach and, after grave warnings about straying too far, guides them through the blackbriar personally. It is said that the briar itself refuses to allow anyone not sanctioned by the house to find the way through.

Blackbriar was established by a highly regarded druid named Mundir d'Vadalis, an avid naturalist who oversaw the house's interests in Xen'drik during the Last War. In the final year of the war, Mundir received a new apprentice breedmaster named Tyris, a young man who had gotten into trouble for allegedly conducting unauthorized breeding experiments in and around his native town of Erlaskar. (Rather than ruin Tyris's life, the head of the Erlaskar enclave opted to send the young man off to Xen'drik.) Mundir was trampled to death in an accident shortly after the Treaty of Thronehold, leaving the fate of the Xen'drik enclave in doubt. Mundir's daughter Khepra pled valiantly for the right to head the operation, but her lack of experience in both breeding and magic ultimately resulted in that critical responsibility falling to Tyris.

Since taking over, Tyris has continued his former master's policies for the most part, but he seems to be taking pains to make the house even more removed from city affairs than before. It takes a rare occurrence to draw him out of Blackbriar, and one of his first acts as house leader was to instruct Rhomas d'Vadalis, his agent in the Citadel of the Twelve, to assume oversight of Tooth and Nail (page 37), the one business in Stormreach that House Vadalis has a direct interest in. Today, Rhomas deals almost exclusively with explorers and other visitors to Xen'drik (such as PCs). All who work for Tyris are sworn to secrecy about their activities, but some have implied that they were hired to capture exotic animals from the wilds of the continent's interior on his behalf.

CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

The ever-changing face of crime in Stormreach is an ugly one. Unlike the situation in Sharn, no single syndicate wields the awesome influence of the Bormar Clan, and no group is capable of the widespread street terror Daask can bring to bear. In Stormreach, gangs rise and fall overnight, replaced by ever leaner, hungrier, and more ruthless criminals who pick clean the bones of dead gangs and assume their illegal business interests. Violent clashes between gangs consume whole districts, until the better-armed local militia puts the hammer to both sides. These crackdowns are bloody, quick, and brutal, with no due process and no quarter given. Most residents of a district clear out before a militia crackdown for fear of being crushed in the chaos.

The clever gangs of Stormreach's mean streets know the tricks of the trade, and they ride the waves of constant unrest. Strength means little in the city's criminal circles. Survival of the smartest is the unspoken law of the underworld, and nobody stupid stays alive for long. Some are stamped out by the law (especially those who challenge the Quickfoot Gang), but most are culled by their betters—left in the sewers with a knife in their back or sunk to the bottom of the harbor.

THE BILGE RATS

Leader: Cartha.

Turf: Harbor district.

Members: 80 dock vermin, 20 wharfbosses, 25 Gifted Rats; Hes (NE male changeling/wererat adept 7); Little Del (NE female halfling/wererat illusionist 7).

Portfolio: Extortion, robbery, theft, smuggling.

Tactics: Bribery, intimidation, politics, violence.

The Bilge Rats are the largest and most powerful gang in the city, with the Harbor district locked firmly in their grasp. For more details on the Rats, see page 91.

THE FLEAS

Leader: Drifter (NE male human ghost rogue 4).

Turf: Harbor district, Cross, the Marketplace, and Locksmith Square.

Members: 40 fleas (1st-level experts of various races); Sear (NE female gnome expert 1/sorcerer 1); Tick (NE half-giant barbarian 1/wilder 1).

Portfolio: Fraud, petty theft.

Tactics: Deception, stealth.

Life is harsh on the streets of Stormreach, and children grow up fast or not at all. A number of gangs of feral children prey on strangers to the city. In the shadows of the city, a ghost watches the savage children and recruits the cream of this motley crop for his gang—a twisted family known as the Fleas.

The leader of the gang is a ghost named Drifter. He has the appearance of a human boy of ten years of

age, blackened and bloated from drowning. Despite his youthful appearance, Drifter is an old spirit and a skilled thief, and he trains his young protégés in the arts of stealth and deception.

Drifter does not discuss his history or reveal his true name, but most believe he was pushed into the harbor by a member of the Stormreach Guard and that his bones are still drifting in the water. Drifter hates adults, and though he grudgingly allows his “family” to work with the older gangs, he always expels members once they reach adulthood.

Sear and Tick, two current high-ranking gang members, have developed significant supernatural abilities that make them formidable adversaries despite their age. Tick's surprising physical and mental might have proven the undoing of more than a few unsuspecting adults.

The Fleas don't claim territory. They move around the city, focusing their attacks on newcomers and travelers.

Fleas rely on their youthful appearance to distract and disorient foreign adults. A common ploy is for six to eight children to surround a traveler, begging and pleading for coppers or sweets; in the process, they use the aid another action to help one of their number use Sleight of Hand to cut the victim's purse. If their guise is discovered, they scatter in all directions. Fleas also run simple con games on gullible foreigners. They are always looking for opportunities to scavenge or take advantage of others. If a group of adventurers engages in a battle in the streets, Fleas dart in and pluck loot from fallen foes while the heroes are still engaged in battle.

Even though they are children, the Fleas have seen more horrors than most adults. They have a maturity beyond their years, coupled with an innocent cruelty. They feel no remorse for their actions, and their only loyalty is to their adopted family. Because of their skills, Fleas advance to join adult gangs once they are old enough; as a result, other criminals watch over the Fleas or pay the Fleas to serve as decoys or lookouts.

The Fleas are typically homeless orphans. Drifter helps them establish safe havens around the city, hideouts they can slip into to escape pursuit. They make full use of their small size, and many of these holes are inaccessible to larger creatures. The gang has three primary dens, located in the Sloths, the Harbor district, and Locksmith Square. At any given time, the members of the gang are split between two of these locations.

The level of skill displayed by the Fleas is remarkable for children, reflecting Drifter's strict training regimen and the fact that he picks his recruits carefully. Fleas who survive long enough typically advance to become full rogues instead of experts. Most of the Fleas are Small creatures and take a –2 penalty to Strength.

THE GOLDEN LIONS

Leader: Jacques the Hook (male human aristocrat 3/rogue 2).

Turf: Forgelight, Locksmith Square, the Marketplace; based in Respite.

Members: 30 Lions (an ever-changing mix of dragon-mark heirs, aristocrats, sycophantic rogues, hangers-on, and the occasional hired muscle).

Portfolio: Assault, extortion, fraud, minor smuggling.

Tactics: Financial coercion, political connections, violence.

This gang is composed of the young members of Stormreach's most respected families. Dragonmarked scions, heirs to wealthy merchant families, and even the child of a Storm Lord or two are all counted among its crew. Most of these dandies think of the "gang" as a social club. On any given night, the Lions are just as likely to go out to a high-end tavern as they are to hit the streets and bust heads. For a select few among the Lions' upper-level members, the gang is a training ground for the vicious political wheeling and dealing they will eventually tackle at the helm of their family's power. Rumors assert that many of the Lions' parents are members of the mysterious Aurum. Powerful families with deep pockets encourage their children's involvement with the Lions. Some view the gang's activities either as a sowing of their kids' oats or a means of grooming them for a place in the Silver Concord when the time is right.

Jacques the Hook's father is a powerful shipping magnate with a twenty-frigate fleet, which moves everything from Karrnathi nightwood ale and bitter cheese to dream serpent hides and Aundairian magic items. Jacques's adolescent violent tendencies developed into psychotic rage. After the boy beat one of his tutors at Morgrave University to death, his father thought some time off from formal studies and an education in Stormreach's underworld might temper Jacques. Instead, the young man's violent nature flourished, and he rose quickly to the gang's helm. Jacques's moniker comes from his penchant for torturing people with a large silver hook.

The Golden Lions are not powerful by any means, but they command respect from other criminals for two reasons. The first is money. This gang is better financed than any other, with the possible exception of the Bilge Rats. The Lions' weekly allowances alone from their gold-heavy families exceed what most gangs' illegal businesses net in a month. Second, their enemies in the underworld fear the retribution that the Golden Lions' parents could bring to bear if one of the gang members was maimed or killed.

The Lions engage in a range of crimes. Some enjoy irresponsible violence and their freedom to beat and maim their lesser members. Others focus on more sophisticated crimes, from blackmail and extortion to elaborate gambling schemes. When the Aurum comes calling, these Lions are likely to make the cut.

THE SHROUDS

Leader: Whisper (female elf rogue 1/cleric 6).

Turf: The Shrouds operate from beneath the city and can strike anywhere in the city.

Members: 25 Shrouds (typically 2nd-level rogues), 6 wraiths, 12 elf zombies, and Rashade (a bodak).

Portfolio: Assassination, assault, extortion, hired muscle, murder.

Tactics: Intimidation, violence.

Gliding through the streets in the dying red of twilight, draped in tattered funeral shrouds like wraiths, these elves strike terror into the hearts of their prey. They are one of the oldest gangs in Stormreach, having first appeared over fifty years ago. They have seemingly been destroyed a number of times during this period, only to rise again after a few years in the shadows. Like the Stillborn of Aerenal (*ECS* 218), members of the gang engage in ritualistic self-mutilation, using toxic alchemical substances to necrotize flesh and peeling away strips of their face with scalpels. The efforts they put into their appearance do not go unrewarded. Business owners and merchants are occasionally willing to stand up to other gangs who try to squeeze "protection" money out of them, but few are willing to stare down a rotting corpse, especially one accompanied by a true zombie or wraith.

Although extortion is their most common activity, the Shrouds also sell their services as hired muscle and killers for hire, using their wraiths as incorporeal killers. Their leader is a loyal ally of the Quickfoot Gang and refuses any contract that would put her at odds with the Quickfoot Gang's leader. The Shrouds have also been known to murder people for no apparent reason; when the inquisitive Shurya d'Velderan was asked to investigate one of these deaths, she concluded that it was a ritual sacrifice—one piece in a grand ritual that might take a century to complete.

The Shrouds are familiar with a series of tunnels beneath the city and can move about unseen. Whereas many gangs confine themselves to a single quarter, the Shrouds can appear anywhere. As a result, they have come into conflict with the Bilge Rats, the Titans, and even the Knights of Thrane. Their affinity for undead would seem to make the Shrouds logical allies for the Blood of Vol, but the elves have shown little interest in working with the largely human Seekers of Grindstone.

The members of the Shrouds include a number of undead that have the ability to create spawn. However, this ability affects only elves. Wraiths kill mortally wounded Shrouds to turn them into new wraiths; if this fails, the gang's leader raises the dead Shroud as a zombie.

The Shrouds are a relatively small gang, but it's possible that the visible Shrouds are merely the tip of an iceberg. Most assume that the Shrouds are an offshoot of the Aereni Stillborn, but a far darker prospect

is that the Shrouds are the descendants of the original elf slaves who remained loyal to the Cul'sir Empire—which would mean that a dark court of wraiths and ghosts has remained hidden in tunnels below the city for thirty thousand years. Whisper and her allies, so the theory goes, are among the few living, corporeal elves of this line, and their sacrifices empower spells cast in the depths. In this case, the horrible disfigurements of the Shrouds might not be caused primarily by necrotizing chemicals, but rather by generations of inbreeding and exposure to negative energy.

The Shrouds are run by an unusually tall elf woman who calls herself Whisper. Nearly seven feet in height and incredibly long-limbed, Whisper is an imposing figure draped in perfumed shrouds. She is a priest of the Keeper, and her talents at intimidation are nearly as impressive as her deadly touch and ability to animate the dead. If it serves the needs of the story, Whisper could be considerably more powerful—especially if she is the emissary of an ancient undead court below Stormreach.

Until recently, Whisper was inseparable from her brother, Rashade. A clash left him dead, but recently he was seen at his sister's side again, this time fully shrouded in veils. They say his gaze alone strikes foes dead now.

THE STORM HAMMERS

Leader: Miraan (LE female human rogue 1/warlock^{CAR} 8).

Turf: Dannel's Pride.

Members: 36 sorcerers, warlocks, and barbarians. A typical member of the Storm Hammers is 4th level, but given the nature of their abilities, it's possible higher-level characters lurk among them.

Portfolio: The Storm Hammers are completely unpredictable and engage in fraud one day and murder the next. Any crime could be laid at their feet.

Tactics: Vary.

At a glance, the members of the Storm Hammers seem to have little in common. A few have the physique one might expect of street toughs, but most seem to be typical commoners—bartenders, farmers, blacksmiths, and the like—and many wear the clothes of these professions. But time spent in the company of the Storm Hammers (were such an experience possible) would reveal the traits that they all share: an utter disregard for law or morality, an inclination toward casual cruelty, and a seeming lack of concern for their personal safety. The Storm Hammers are true sociopaths, monsters in human form more terrifying than any ogre or zombie.

The Storm Hammers claim to be survivors of the Mourning, the event that destroyed the nation of Cyre. The events they witnessed on the Day of Mourning were horrifying and gruesome, though the Hammers relate these tales with the same equanimity another person might use to discuss the weather. If these stories are

true, it would hardly be surprising for these people to have been driven mad by their experiences. But there might be more to it than that. The Hammers weren't Cyran soldiers or wizards; most were simply commoners. But following the Mourning, they found themselves with new talents—dark magic and combat abilities born of simmering rage. Even though they are a relatively small gang, these abilities make the Storm Hammers a threat to much larger groups, and their full capabilities remain to be seen.

It might be logical to expect the Storm Hammers to sympathize with Dannel's Wrath (page 75), but the Hammers are anything but logical. They have no interest in a new Cyre or a unified Galifar. Those who lacked the strength to survive the Mourning deserve nothing more than death. The Storm Hammers view themselves as the first children of a new generation. They saw the end of the world and survived, and now they see themselves as beyond any mortal law.

The Storm Hammers are completely unpredictable. They are capable of acts of astonishing violence and cruelty. Sometimes they seem to be motivated by greed, whereas at other times simple boredom drives them. The Storm Hammers have been touched by the Mourning, and some whisper that a darker force guides them—a sinister spirit that links them together, with a secret agenda that draws would-be members to Stormreach.

Miraan is the charismatic leader of the Hammers. Through the use of her *devil's tongue* and *charm* invocations, she is capable of causing considerable chaos without resorting to her deadly *eldritch blasts*. If threatened, she retreats using *flee the scene*. Rumor has it that she keeps a menagerie of living cantrips and other creatures of the Mournland in her hideout. Some believe that Miraan's powers are far greater than she has revealed; she likes to claim that she is linked to the Mourning itself, and a DM looking for a recurring villain could increase her abilities with each encounter.

THE TITANS

Leader: Jamraal Ridgebreak (male half-giant psychic warrior^{EPH} 4).

Turf: Southwatch, Cross, Harbor district.

Members: 20 half-giants, 3 ogres.

Portfolio: Assault, extortion, hired muscle, robbery.

Tactics: Intimidation, violence.

The Titans see themselves as the true children of Stormreach, and all others as interlopers on their ancestral home (despite the fact that most half-giants are descended from Sarlonan slaves brought to Xen'drik by the Inspired). Their leader, Jamraal Ridgebreak, claims to be of stone giant heritage because of his gray skin and bald head.

The Titans tower over their foes and revel in their physical and psionic might. Still, for all their advantages,

they lack the savvy to navigate the twists and turns of Stormreach's treacherous underworld. More often than not, the Titans end up being used in other crew's schemes and not seeing a big cut of the profits.

The half-giants don't walk softly, and they attract far too much attention with their brutish tactics. The gang suffered badly at the hands of more than a few Guard crackdowns recently, and their enemies far outnumber their friends.

THE NIGHT TIDE

Stormreach has a thriving black market, more expansive than most cities three times its size. The market is called the Night Tide, a name dating from the days when smugglers came in with the night tide to sell their wares. Nearly everyone in the city relies on its services on a daily basis.

The constant influx of dragonshards, ancient relics, and other treasures from the continent's interior feed the underground market well. The luxuries and amenities brought legally into the city and tariffed by the Harbor Lord cannot fully satisfy the residents' demands. In the Night Tide, Brelish sausages and Aundairian fine wines can be purchased alongside Siberys shards the size of a gnome's head and sacrificial daggers used in blood rites over twenty thousand years ago.

When the PCs are looking to buy illegal goods discreetly or fence loot from their latest adventure in Xen'drik, the Night Tide is the way to go. The following persons work the Tide and can be found by any interested buyers or sellers who make a DC 15 Gather Information check.

Baudry Cartamon: An obese human who wears his hair slicked back with a quart of whale grease, Baudry is a smuggler and a two-copper thief, though he thinks of himself as an entrepreneur. Baudry is interested in purchasing any treasure the PCs bring back from the jungle, but he always tries to hoodwink them.

Tyrl Gol Garin: A bespectacled gnome who runs the Pestle, what appears to be a simple apothecary shop in the Marketplace, Tyrl deals in some of the foulest substances known to Eberron—mainly poisons and disease-causing agents. He also maintains an impressive collection of potions, though who knows when he'll poison one just for fun.

Three-Fingered Thad: A dark-haired dwarf who deals in weapons and armor, Thad is missing more fingers than he has left. Some believe he loses them in accidents with powerful magic weapons that come his way, but the wounds are self-inflicted. The dwarf maims himself as punishment for some dark sin in his past.

THE QUICKFOOT GANG

Stormreach lacks an obvious equivalent to the Bormar Clan in Sharn; no single power dominates the underworld here. But just because something's not

obvious doesn't mean it's not there. Anyone who makes a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check has heard of a cabal hidden in the shadows of Stormreach, a criminal fraternity known as the Quickfoot Gang. Quickfoot chooses one member of every significant gang or criminal guild to serve as a contact point; this mouthpiece is expected to turn over a share of his organization's profits and to relay messages from the gang. As long as the tithes are paid, Quickfoot rarely takes action. However, groups that defy Quickfoot are targeted both by criminals and the Stormreach Guard. It doesn't take a genius to conclude that the leader of Quickfoot—a figure known to members as the Spider—is the Storm Lord Kirris Sel Shadra.

INDEPENDENT CRIMINALS

Not every criminal operating in Stormreach is backed by a gang. Described below are two independent criminals the PCs might encounter.

Scaramar (NE male gnome rogue 5/assassin 7): High-priced and extremely efficient, Scaramar is Stormreach's premier hired blade and poisoner. The assassin is never seen with the same identity twice, and his elderly gnome servant is his only confidant and companion. The few people who even know he exists assume that Scaramar is a changeling. In truth, Scaramar is the elderly servant, and the other "assassins" are cat's-paws the gnome uses, murders, and discards like garbage. Scaramar recruits up-and-coming killers with the same line every time: "I'm getting old, and I want to pass on my skills to a suitable protégé. Let me teach you all there is to know about assassination."

Scaramar trains his minions for a short time before sending them on their first mission. The gnome accompanies his protégé on the job to ensure that all goes smoothly. When the target is eliminated, the gnome murders his unwitting accomplice and searches for another. Scaramar has carefully plied his trade for years since his forced exile from Zilargo. Still, one of his protégés might escape him and seek the party's help. Scaramar has a thousand enemies who want him dead. If the PCs can expose him or, better yet, kill the old gnome themselves, they can earn rewards from the many in Stormreach who have lost relatives and partners to the assassin.

The Stirge: The elite of Stormreach pay thousands of gold pieces a year to ensure security for their enclaves and manors, but one notorious cat burglar has found ways around every defense. This masked culprit is known only as the Stirge. More than a few suspicious souls have seen the incredible acrobatic performances of Nat Gann (page 38), dancing from pole to pole with the grace of a cat, and some whisper the acrobat is none other than the Stirge himself. The PCs might be hired to track down the Stirge by someone he burglarized, or they might hire the talented thief to acquire an item beyond their reach or to supply them with a detailed plan to infiltrate a stronghold.

MILITIAS

Whereas gangs like the Bilge Rats and Golden Lions are largely driven by greed, the militias of Stormreach are bound together by political or religious agendas. Even as they fight against their enemies, most of the militias work to defend their wards from gangs and criminals. The people of Whitewash are grateful for the presence of the Ninth Wands, and Grindstone's residents regard the Swords of Karrn with a mixture of fear and respect.

Militias provide a DM with an opportunity to pull adventurers into the conflicts within Stormreach and to draw on their ties to the Last War. If a PC wizard served in the Aundairian army, the Ninth Wands might appeal to her patriotism and demand her assistance in an upcoming strike against the Knights of Thrane. Dannel's Wrath presents a dilemma for Cyrans; does their love for their fallen country justify their deadly acts? Beyond this, the militias also oppose criminal adventurers. The Stormreach Guard won't pursue a PC who kills a blacksmith. But if that blacksmith lives in Grindstone, the Swords of Karrn avenge his death.

The militias don't provide a picture of the typical inhabitants of Stormreach. Many of the soldiers are veterans of elite units, and Drago Thul and the Dragonhawk were heroes of the Last War. Beyond the exceptional skills of their soldiers, the militias have the sympathy of the inhabitants of their wards, and this support can be a valuable weapon.

DANNEL'S WRATH

Standard Militia: AL N, NE; 10,000 gp resource limit; Membership 120; Mixed (humans 83, half-elves 11, halflings 9, gnomes 8, changelings 6, dwarves 2, warforged 1).

Authority Figures: Fury (NE male changeling urban ranger^{UA} 5/Cyran avenger^{FN} 4). If the DM doesn't have access to *Unearthed Arcana* or *Five Nations*, Fury should be a rogue 5/assassin 4.

Important Figures: Eston (NE female human artificer 7); Metrol (N male personality warforged fighter 5).

Typical Members: N human warrior 2; N human rogue 2; N human ranger 2.

Base of Operations: Dannel's Pride (hidden).

The Mourning killed over a million Cyrans and left hundreds of thousands of refugees. Many Cyrans aren't willing to wait for Prince Oargev's diplomatic efforts to bear fruit. Some want bloody vengeance against those they see as responsible for the destruction of their nation. The latter are the core of the group known as Dannel's Wrath. Some are former soldiers from the Cyran army. Others are criminals or commoners brought together by their shared desire for revenge.

The stated goal of Dannel's Wrath is to employ violence and terror to force the Five Nations to improve their treatment of Cyrans across the world. The leaders of the Wrath have stated that they will not stop until the

Cyrans are given a homeland once again. Many believe that Stormreach fits the bill; these activists claim that Stormreach and Xen'drik itself should be granted to the Cyran refugees. So far, Dannel's Wrath has focused on vigilante justice against those who harm Cyrans, but there have been a few acts of public violence; as time goes on, they might begin using war magic in markets and taverns or taking similarly aggressive actions.

The members of Dannel's Wrath are hidden among the massed refugees of Dannel's Pride. The structure of the organization is intentionally vague, so even when the Stormreach Guard captures agents of the Wrath, it's hard to shut down the entire group. In addition, many refugees who aren't part of the Wrath sympathize with the group and aid its members in small ways. Others, more cautious, fear that the Storm Lords might one day take action against the entire Cyran community in an effort to destroy the Wrath.

The local leader of the Wrath is a changeling named Fury. He maintains multiple identities within Dannel's Pride, using a different face for every cell he works with. Once an infamous Cyran spy, Fury is embittered by the loss of his family and is utterly ruthless; he believes that he is at war with every nation in the world. The Royal Eyes of Aundair and the King's Dark Lanterns both want to capture Fury so he can pay for his actions during the Last War.

The woman known as Eston is another vitally important member of Dannel's Wrath. An artificer of considerable skill, she produces the magic items used in Wrath operations, including arcane explosives. Should Dannel's Wrath begin using *fireballs* in taverns and markets, capturing Eston becomes a priority. Eston won't speak of her past, but many believe that she's an expatriate of House Cannith and that she seeks vengeance on Cannith as well as the Five Nations. The limited resources available in Dannel's Pride restrict what Eston can create.

Dannel's Wrath is the largest of the militias described here, and it has the easiest time rebuilding its losses, since there are always more Cyrans looking for vengeance. In addition to acts of political violence, members of the Wrath fight to protect the inhabitants of Dannel's Pride, though they take pains to remain hidden.

Righteous anger lies at the heart of Dannel's Wrath. Most of the members of the Wrath were good people once; however, their desire for revenge and the pure madness of the Mourning have driven them to desperate and amoral acts. They are not simple criminals or assassins. They are people who have suffered a terrible loss and who have been pushed across a moral line by this loss. In their own eyes, they are on a quest for justice, and they believe that their actions help other Cyrans in need.

THE KNIGHTS OF THRANE

Minor Militia: AL LG, LN; 10,000 gp resource limit; Membership 40; Mixed (humans 30, dwarves 4, half-elves 4, elves 2).

Authority Figures: Valen Vanatar (LG male human warrior 5/expert 2).

Important Figures: Taris Irvallo (LG female half-elf adept 4); Arrun Stone (LN male dwarf knight^{PH2} 5).

Typical Member: LG human warrior 3.

Base of Operations: Embers.

When King Thalin of Thrane died, a popular uprising turned the people against Prince Daslin and ushered in the theocratic government that reigns today. The Knights of Thrane were the sworn defenders of the throne, and many were prepared to lay down their lives to defend the rights of their king. Daslin wouldn't allow it, demanding that his soldiers obey the will of the people. Many did, and in Thrane the order now serves both Queen and Keeper. However, some simply couldn't stomach the change. These knights turned their backs on Galifar and made their way to the expatriate community of Stormreach.

The Knights of Thrane seek to protect their own and to preserve the old values of Thrane. They see Embers as the last bastion of Thrane culture, and new immigrants are pressured to conform to their traditions. Foremost among these is respect for the blood of Wynarn and the royal family of Thrane. A knight begins every meal with a toast to Queen Diani and to the day when she holds her throne once more. Even so, most knights are followers of the Silver Flame and seek to live by the virtues of the Flame, which sets them apart from the secular Throneholder movement (*FN* 135). Faith is important to the knights and the people of Embers. But they believe that their faith—their dedication to the true principles of the Silver Flame—demands that they oppose the theocracy, which will inevitably tarnish the values of both church and state.

Despite the fact that most of the knights have never set foot in Thrane, they are passionately devoted to the *idea* of their homeland. This attitude leads the knights to take violent action against those they consider to be enemies of their state. Most of the knights are good people, and they won't attack helpless innocents. But anyone who raises suspicions—such as former soldiers—might trigger violent action. The Swords of Karrn are seen as a threat, and the knights occasionally strike at Sword patrols. And if Dannel's Wrath launches attacks across the city, the knights might conclude that all Cyrans are dangerous.

The knights are led by Valen Vanatar, the grandson of one of the original knights. Vanatar is a passionate man, easily stirred to action by perceived injustice or a threat to Embers. Taris Irvallo is one of the few people in Embers who has a true connection to the Silver Flame, but she chooses to work with the knights instead of at the Keep of the Silver Flame. She is a gentle woman, and she tries to prevent Vanatar from engaging in rash action. The dwarf Arrun Stone is the last of the original immigrant knights. Arrun is a stoic individual who prefers to let Vanatar direct the knights, but he is the strongest among them and always at the forefront of any battle.

THE NINTH WANDS

Minor Militia: AL N; 45,000 gp resource limit; Membership 30; Mixed (humans 17, half-elves 6, gnomes 5, elves 2).

Authority Figures: The Dragonhawk (Elira Dawn) (NE female elf wizard 13); Jorian Thiel (N male human warmage^{PH2} 8).

Important Figures: Blackwind Beleth (N female human wizard 5); Tyrnan Thiel (N male human duskblade^{CAr} 5).

Typical Member: N human warrior 3/magewright 1 or N human wizard 3.

Base of Operations: Whitewash.

Aundair has long been the seat of the Arcane Congress and the focal point for mystical research within Galifar. Aundair is the smallest of the Five Nations and lacks the industrial resources of Karrnath or Breland. During the Last War, the nation relied on arcane magic to offset these limitations.

As the war continued, King Aarott charged Arcanix to produce more efficient weapons of war. The mages assigned to the Seven Stones project delved into the techniques of the daelkyr, the magic of the Age of Demons, and eldritch machines in the quest to end the war. Their achievements were terrifying. Even Aundairians grew fearful of Arcanix, and young Aurala was horrified when she learned that her own wizards were actively seeking to produce even deadlier effects. When Breland demanded the execution of the Seven Stones mages as a condition for alliance, Aurala agreed, creating a rift between throne and tower that remains to this day. Brelish envoys witnessed the executions of the seven wizards. That should have been the end of it.

At the end of the Last War, Aundair released a number of its soldiers from service. Most dispersed to their families, but one elite infantry unit—the Queen's Ninth Wands—traveled to Stormreach. Over the course of the past two years, they have fought off gangs and criminals that threatened the people of Whitewash, dealt with drunken adventurers, and clashed with the Knights of Thrane and the Swords of Karrn. To all appearances, the Ninth Wands are Aundairian patriots with no interest in peace, soldiers who traveled to Stormreach so they could continue fighting the war.

The truth is more complicated. The Ninth Wands are still serving Aundair—or, more specifically, Royal Minister of Magic Adal ir'Wynarn. Not all of the Seven Stones wizards were executed. The greatest among them was a woman named Elira Dawn. Elira is one of the most gifted wizards Arcanix has produced, and she is a protégé of one of Arcanix's other great wizards: Mordain the Fleshweaver. When Mordain learned of her scheduled execution, he contacted Minister Adal and provided a remarkable simulacrum of Elira. Adal approved of the work Elira had done for her country, and with his help the simulacrum was executed instead. Elira established a new life in



The Ninth Wands clash with the Titans on the streets of Whitewash

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Stormreach. To this day, she studies the ancient works of the giants and other powerful forces, waiting for the call to return to her beloved homeland.

Adal sent the Ninth Wands to Stormreach to serve Elira. Only their commander, Jorian Thiel, knows the true identity of this woman they have been sent to protect. The others know Elira only as the Dragonhawk. They know that she is engaged in secret work on behalf of their nation, but most assume that she is simply an Arcanix researcher studying the Age of Giants.

Elira spends most of her time in a *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*. She moves the entrance around according to a schedule; Jorian knows where to find her, but the entrance is difficult for her enemies to track. Many people in Khorvaire would like to see her dead—not the least of which are King Boranel of Breland and Queen Aurala of Aundair. Along with Hassalac Chaar (page 89), she is one of the most powerful spellcasters in Stormreach. However, thanks to her many enemies, she spends little time in public and rarely exercises her remarkable talents. It's up to the DM to decide what discoveries she has made over the last fifteen years; does she have a vault of terrifying weapons ready for use when the war begins anew?

The Ninth Wands are an elite military unit. The members know each other well and have developed group tactics. Each soldier carries an *eternal wand*; the officers carry two wands. Although most of these are low-power effects (*color spray*, *ray of enfeeblement*), a few higher-level wands are scattered among the platoon, including two *eternal wands of dispel magic*, an *eternal wand of fireball*, and an *eternal wand of lightning bolt*. The group's greatest firepower is in the hands of its commander. Jorian Thiel is one of the top warmages to serve in the military, and he has even been offered a place in the Knights Arcane. He preferred to stay with his soldiers and in the service of Lord Adal. If it comes to open battle, he can unleash terrible power.

THE SWORDS OF KARRN

Standard Militia: AL LN; 15,000 gp resource limit; Membership 72; Mixed (humans 55, dwarves 17).

Authority Figures: Drago Thul (LN male human fighter 2/expert 4/legendary leader^{HB} 5).

Important Figures: Mordalyn ir'Tanar (LN female human aristocrat 4/fighter 3); Reng Nagel (LN male human wizard 6).

Typical Member: LN human fighter 4 or LN human warrior 6.

Base of Operations: Grindstone.

In many ways, the district of Grindstone is a separate city within Stormreach, and it is a city under martial law. Grim soldiers patrol the streets. One warrior wears Aundairian leather, another heavy Karrnathi chain. But both bear the same device on their tabards and shields: a greatsword crossed by two longswords, set against a field of black. These are the Swords of Karrn, drawn from among the deadliest warriors of the Five Nations.

The Swords defend the Karrnathi immigrants of Grindstone, and many assume that the sympathies of the militia lie with Karrnath. This is a mistake. Instead, the Swords of Karrn are bound together by the teachings of Karrn the Conqueror, by a secret faith, and by their devotion to a man named Drago Thul—a person they wish to place on the throne of a new united realm.

Drago Thul is a brilliant military commander. He served Karrnath with distinction during the Last War. His common birth slowed his rise in the ranks, but his skill and his religious connections helped him overcome the limits of his birth. He bitterly opposed Regent Moranna's Mror campaign, a prophetic act that earned him the favor of many soldiers. He also protested the use of undead and warforged; a student of Karrn's teachings, he believed that both practices sullied the art of war.

When Kaius III began paving the way for peace and the Treaty of Thronehold, Drago Thul refused to lay down his arms. Kaius had no intention of letting the commoner commander interfere with his plans, and he ordered Drago's execution. With the help of a small band of loyal followers, Drago fought his way to the coast and escaped to Stormreach. There, Drago

declared that a thousand years had turned Wynarn blood to water. He would no longer serve any Wynarn king or fight to restore the nation of Galifar. It was time to create a new kingdom from the ashes of the old, following in the footsteps of Galifar I and Karrn the Conqueror. He called on the soldiers of all nations to abandon their weak rulers and flock to his banner. Stormreach is a safe haven for the Swords of Karrn, but it is only a waypoint on their journey. Sword envoys are spreading across the Five Nations, sharing the words of Drago Thul with every veteran they can find. The group has less than a hundred members in Stormreach, but it's up to the DM to decide just how much influence Drago Thul has in Khorvaire. Perhaps no one is interested in his dreams of conquest. But it's possible that thousands of soldiers spread across the Five Nations are ready for change, just waiting for Drago to return to Khorvaire.

For now, Drago remains in Stormreach. He has transformed Grindstone into a vision of his ideal state, imposing a rule even harsher than that of the Code of Kaius. Under the watchful eyes of his soldiers, Grindstone is one of the safest places in Stormreach. The Swords dispense harsh justice whenever the peace is disturbed; criminals might be beaten, maimed, or even killed. Occasionally the Swords venture outside Grindstone in pursuit of enemies, but by and large they are content to police their territory. They have no respect for the Stormreach Guard, and few guards enter Grindstone without direct orders.

The Swords of Karrn are one of the most dangerous forces in Stormreach. Its members are drawn from the elite forces of the Five Nations; they are not simply soldiers, but among the best soldiers Khorvaire has to

KARRN THE CONQUEROR AND THE THREE FACES OF WAR

Karrn the Conqueror is a legendary hero. A thousand years before the rise of Galifar, Karrn came a hairs-breadth from establishing a Karrnathi dominion across Khorvaire. He was never defeated on the battlefield; it took the treachery of a trusted friend to bring down the Conqueror. Even though Karrn died with his dreams unrealized, his actions and teachings left a mark on Khorvaire that can be seen to this day. He was a soldier first and foremost, but Karrn was also a spiritual man; he was one of the founders of the Three Faces of War, a sect devoted to the wise Dol Arrah, the brave Dol Dorn, and the cunning Dol Azur, known as the Mockery.

Karrn the Conqueror is long dead, but his *Analects of War* is still studied in proud Rekkenmark and the fledgling war colleges of other nations. In the shadows of these institutions, the Three Faces of War watch and guide the generals of the next age. Adept

and initiates of the Three can be found in almost every army, with the notable exception of Thrane. This is a soldier's faith. Its shrines are the battlefield and the rampart wall, and its blessings are blood and steel. Faith in the Three will not stop enemies from fighting; these are the Sovereigns of War, after all. But when two soldiers negotiate or meet in times of peace, the mysteries of the Three can provide a bridge and a bond between them. Even though he isn't a spellcaster, Drago Thul is one of the most respected speakers of the faith, and this status has helped him sway soldiers of different nations.

The Three Faces of War is a variant sect of the Sovereign Host. Clerics of this faith can choose the halberd, longsword, or kama as a favored weapon (once this choice is made, it cannot be changed), and can select domains from those of Dol Dorn, Dol Arrah, or the Mockery.

offer. They are equipped with masterwork and magical equipment, and they react to challenges with a careful grasp of tactics. Despite coming from many nations, the soldiers are bound together by their faith in the Three Faces of War (see the sidebar) and the words of Drago Thul. The Swords enforce Karrnathi values, but they seek to bring back the old Karrnath of Karrn's time. It's not a case of holding one of the Five Nations over the rest: It's wiping away the weak traditions of Galifar and returning to something pure.

Drago is a skilled swordsman, but his true talent lies in his strategic brilliance and his ability to inspire soldiers. If the legendary leader prestige class isn't available, he should be a fighter 3/bard 8, using oratory to inspire courage and competence in his troops. Either way, his skills and feats focus on tactics and leadership as opposed to direct combat abilities. He considers the use of undead in battle to sully the teachings of Karrn, but he has no issue with the basic faith of the Blood of Vol, and he respects the local priestess, Berrinessa (page 81). He has engaged in negotiations with emissaries of the Emerald Claw; he has no intention of becoming another pawn in Vol's schemes, but for the moment he can't afford to oppose her.

Other critical personalities among the Swords include the Aundairian war-wizard Reng Nagel, one of the few arcane casters among the Swords. The Ninth Wands despise Reng and have tried to kill him on multiple occasions. Mordalyn ir'Tanar is the daughter of a Karrnathi warlord who has abandoned her birthright to pursue Drago's dream. Mordalyn is a diplomat as well as a warrior, and between her skills and her history she has helped Drago sway many from blind loyalty to the Wynarn line.

RELIGIONS

The people of Stormreach come from many nations, and these immigrants and explorers brought their faiths with them. In addition to these traditional faiths, Stormreach is home to many unusual religions. Close contact with the sahuagin and the giants introduced new ideas into the old traditions of humanity, and religions suppressed in Khorvaire—such as the worship of the Blood of Vol and the Dark Six—are practiced openly in Stormreach. Almost any religion a Dungeon Master can devise could find its way to Temple Row. However, a few faiths dominate the spiritual landscape of Stormreach. These are discussed below.

THE CHURCH OF THE SILVER FLAME

The priests of the Silver Flame have always sought to spread their faith, and when word reached Thrane of the new city taking shape across the Thunder Sea, the cardinals were quick to send ministers and templars to the shattered land. A wave of Thrane immigrants

helped establish the keep now found in the Temple district. Keeper Tzandra had a vision of a ministry that would bring the Flame to the drow and the giants and a bastion that would hold back any darkness that might threaten the city.

Reality fell far short of the dream. Stormreach was founded by pirates and smugglers, and the priests of the Silver Flame received a cold welcome. Missionaries sent to spread the word to the dark elves rarely returned, and by the time King Thalin of Thrane died, only a single minister and a handful of acolytes were left at the keep. This proved to be another turning point for the Silver Flame in Stormreach. After long debate, they rejected the Keeper's decision to assume control of Thrane. Both church and crown had roles to play, the priests explained, and it was a mistake for one to supplant the other; it would only lead the church away from its true purpose.

The Council of Cardinals was infuriated by this rebellion, but with the Last War in full swing, the Thranes couldn't afford to send new forces to this distant post. Instead, the city was formally severed from Flamekeep. To this day, the keep receives no support from Thrane, and the faithful are warned to beware the words of these heretic priests. Now that the war is over, some believe that Flamekeep should reclaim the keep. However, the people of Embers stand behind their minister, and Keeper Jaela Daran is more willing to accept diversity than her predecessors had been; for the moment, Stormreach has been left on its own.

As a result, the Silver Flame has little power in Stormreach. Three priests serve at the keep: Minister Jirian Zayne (NG male half-elf adept 4/expert 3), Acolyte Myla Flamesworn (NG female human adept 1/expert 4), and Templar Guin Silverblood (LG male human expert 3/warrior 3), a master archer who trains members of the congregation in the use of the longbow. The keep is a sanctuary for the faithful of the Flame, and the priests of the temple are glad to work with traveling paladins or clerics. But they learned long ago that they lack the strength to fight the darkness within or below Stormreach, and they save their spells to protect those in true need of sanctuary.

Opposition to the theocracy is only one of the heretical beliefs found in Stormreach. A number of the people who helped establish Embers came to pursue their unconventional traditions without fear of persecution. Others have adapted their faith over the course of generations in Stormreach and exposure to legends of the past.

He only speaks of it to his most trusted parishioners, but Guin Silverblood practices the traditions of an ancient serpent cult, passed down to Guin's father by a feathered yuan-ti. Although the values are similar to those of the modern church, this faith teaches that the Silver Flame was kindled by the sacrifice of the couatls in the dawn times; Tira Miron and the Keeper

*Tales tell of wondrous treasures
in the hoard of the Wyrms Ascendant*



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of the Flame are stewards who bring the light of the Flame to humans too limited to see the ancient force on their own. Guin has served as an intermediary for the shulassakar yuan-ti in the past, and this could serve as the basis for an adventure.

THE SOVEREIGN HOST

Xen'drik is a hard land, and in the early days of Stormreach—before the Stormreach Compact and the arrival of House Jorasco—divine magic often meant the difference between life and death. Luckily for the sailors who followed the faith, priests of the Sovereign Host were on hand to help them . . . for a share of their ill-gotten gains. When the city was founded, a temple to the Sovereigns was established in the district of

Forgelight, a location chosen for its security and its proximity to the fighting folk of Stormreach.

This temple is easily identified by the Octogram symbol above its gate. The icons within the temple depict the gods in draconic form, using the shapes described on pages 68–69 of the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*. Mosaics depict images of these dragons in battle with fiends. Even though the priests of the temple worship the Sovereigns, their faith is slightly different from the common tradition of the Five Nations; they follow a path known as the Church of the Wyrms Ascendant. According to this doctrine, the dragons are the children of Eberron and Siberys. Once they defeated the children of Khyber in the Age of Demons, the greatest among them were blessed by Eberron and Siberys

THE TREASURES OF THE WYRM ASCENDANT

An adventurer who listens to the rumors of Stormreach (and makes a DC 15 bardic knowledge check or DC 20 Knowledge [local] check) hears the tale of the hoard of treasures hidden beneath the Temple of the Sovereign Host. According to the rumors, this hoard includes two centuries of tithes combined with a vast array of draconic artifacts and relics recovered over

the decades. Stories speak of dragonscale armor taken off the corpses of Seren barbarians, magic weapons wielded by dragons in human form, and even a scale plucked from Aureon's hide. The tales say that these treasures are protected by traps, dragon spirits, and terrible curses. But surely these are just rumors . . . aren't they?

and drawn up to the heavens to watch over all mortal creatures. The priests of the Wyrms Ascendant are fascinated by dragons and seek to acquire artifacts and relics—magical and otherwise—related to dragons. One of the ways in which church doctrine differs from the faith of the Five Nations concerns the afterlife. The priests of the Wyrms believe that those who serve the Sovereigns and build a hoard can literally buy their way into the heavens, joining the Sovereigns on a transcendent plane as heavenly dragons.

In practice, there is little difference between the rituals of the Wyrms Ascendant and the common faith of the Sovereigns. The priests invoke the Sovereigns by their traditional names, and while they speak of ascension and depict their gods as dragons, little about the faith is truly alarming; a warrior who has scant knowledge of religion could sit through a service and not realize that anything was amiss. Clerics use the traditional domains and favored weapons. One obvious difference, however, is the greed of the priests. Graft and avarice are accepted values of the Wyrms Ascendant, since every dragon must have his hoard. Provided that they share their gains with the church coffers, it's taken for granted that priests capable of casting divine magic perform their miracles in exchange for gold or treasures. There is no set rate for this; the costs from the *Player's Handbook* can be used as a guideline, but a priest can always choose to charge more if the customer can afford it. This isn't a business—it is a holy tradition of the Wyrms Ascendant. People in need of healing are better served by the Jorasco enclave, but other clerical services can be bought at the temple if the price is right.

Powerful priests are rare in Stormreach, but the church of the Wyrms Ascendant has always produced strong spellcasters. The high priest of the temple is Maru Sakhesh (NE male human cleric 10), and his chief acolytes are Cael Durn (NG male elf adept

8) and Tania Drake (NE female human cleric 6). Sakhesh is a cruel but charismatic man, and he has brought a considerable fortune to the temple coffers during his tenure. He was killed by a band of adventurers in 997 YK, but the Jorasco healers were able to raise him from the dead; since that incident, he tends to be somewhat suspicious of wanderers. Cael Durn is the kindest of the priests, though he still believes in the doctrine that miracles have their price. Tania Drake is young for a cleric but has displayed remarkable talent; she is ambitious and hopes to replace Sakhesh as high priest once her powers have grown. To this end, she is very interested in recovering draconic artifacts from the wilds of Xen'drik. She has conducted extensive research into the giant-dragon war, and she could be a valuable—if unscrupulous—all for adventurers.

The primary temple of the Sovereign Host is dedicated to the Wyrms Ascendant, but shrines to both the Sovereigns and the Dark Six are scattered throughout Temple Row and across the city, in forms both traditional and untraditional. Maru Sakhesh is the highest-level divine spellcaster willing to sell his services, but there might be a few adepts hidden among the experts and commoners who populate Temple Row.

THE BLOOD OF VOL

Outside of Karrnath, the religion known as the Blood of Vol is rarely practiced in the open in the Five Nations as a whole, and it is actively persecuted within the borders of Thrane. Yet Stormreach lies outside the purview of the Five Nations. Seekers here live and worship without fear of reprisal. Xen'drik is the only true home that many Seekers can or will ever know.

As a result, the faith has grown disproportionately popular in Stormreach. Its adherents practice openly (and often with great pride) and are granted every protection under the law, which is to say that the Storm

SEEKERS OF STORMREACH

The following is a partial list of the prominent members of the Blood of Vol in Stormreach. When referring to this list, the DM should keep two things in mind: First, not all of these figures attend services at Rosewood, and second, this list is *not* common knowledge or even something that could be discerned with a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (local) check. At the DM's discretion, a Gather Information check might set the PCs on the right path (though not necessarily provide any concrete proof), and the individuals for whom this is a possibility are marked as such with an accompanying DC for the roll. If no DC is indicated, then no roll will reveal that character as a Seeker.

Berrinessa (N female human adept 9), temple head at Rosewood (DC 10).

Captain Drigh (LN male human warrior 1/fighter 4), captain in the Stormreach Guard (DC 25).

Ereg (NE male human expert 5/ranger 3), retired hunter and tracker (DC 27).

Thrifty Thom (CN male human commoner 2), owner of the Thrifty Traveler (DC 20).

Toven d'Cannith (N male human aristocrat 1/wizard 9), mage of the Citadel of the Twelve.

Lady Miravella (CN female elf necromancer 7/blood magus^{CAr} 4), head of the Thuranni enclave.

??? (LE expert 5/adept 2), one of the four Coin Lords of Stormreach (identity unknown).



The people of Grindstone are fiercely protective of the local priestess of Vol

Lords have accepted the religion's presence. It even has a public temple of its own, located in the Grindstone ward of Southwatch. Called Rosewood by its congregants, the temple sits within the skeleton of an ancient ruin. To save on cost, the builders worked the construction of the new building into and around the ruins of the old, and when they were finished, covered the entire structure in rosevine, a rare crimson-hued ivy from Xen'drik's interior. In game terms, the plant grants the entire building a massive coat of vine armor (SX 136).

The Blood of Vol isn't an especially hierarchical faith in Stormreach, and its adherents largely worship on their time and terms. But it still requires someone to lead rites and maintain Rosewood for the congregation. These duties fall to a quiet herbalist named Berrinessa (N female human adept 9). The local Karrns think very highly of Berrinessa and are fiercely protective of both her privacy and her well-being. (One widely circulated story relates how thugs once tried to mug her and were, for their temerity, promptly stoned to death by half the population of Grindstone.) Just about anybody who has been in Grindstone for more than a day knows that if anything untoward should befall Berrinessa, the entire ward could very well erupt in violence. Although Berrinessa is certainly the most public Seeker in town,

the three most influential keep their true religious leanings to themselves.

Foremost among these is the Seeker who sits among the ranks of the Coin Lords (see page 58). After that comes Lady Miravella Uruvai (CN female elf necromancer 7/blood magus^{CAR} 4), the head of the local Thuranni enclave, and Toven d'Cannith (N human aristocrat 1/wizard 9), a Cyran who led his house in Stormreach until Merrix d'Cannith sent a representative to depose him. All three of these figures keep their faith a closely guarded secret. They never appear at Rosewood, even though the faith is practiced openly in the city. They try to discredit or destroy anyone who makes noises about their being connected to the faith in any way.

THE CULT OF THE DEVOURER

Those who seek proof of the exotic nature of Stormreach need look no farther than the harbor, where a slender stone tower rises out of the water. Its shape is more reminiscent of a stalagmite than a worked building, but the *continual flames* illuminating its narrow windows suggest otherwise. This is the temple of the Devourer, known to the locals as Shargon's Talon. Followers of the Sovereign Host occasionally make sacrifices to the Devourer when natural disasters threaten, but the congregation of the Talon places the Devourer above

all other gods. The doctrine of this sect holds that it was the Devourer alone who defeated the fiends of the first age, and that the force of this battle raised the lands above the sea. The faithful are taught to embrace the fury of nature, preparing for the time when the Devourer will scour the earth and draw all back beneath the waves. The holy texts also speak of devouring the strength of fallen foes; though it's possible to read these literally, most of the faithful would never go so far as to practice cannibalism.

One of the more unusual aspects of the cult of the Devourer is the fact that emissaries from the local sahuagin often participate in the sacred rituals. These priests consider humans to be flawed cousins, stripped of scale and weak of lung, but they pity these humans and consider it an act of charity to help them find the right path.

Members of this sect are expected to be skilled swimmers, and although some take rowboats out to the Talon, swimming the distance is considered an act of devotion.

Although the Devourer is the primary deity of this sect, the faithful are also taught to respect the Fury. Clerics can choose their domains from either deity, and the favored weapon of the sect is the trident.

The two high priests of the sect are the sahuagin Khalaash and the elf Seryssa. Neither sells spellcasting services, and the extent of their mystical abilities—if any—remains a mystery.

THE CULTS OF THE DRAGON BELOW

The Cults of the Dragon Below can appear anywhere, and collapse with equal ease. The cults are driven by madness, and any mad preacher can find a place on Temple Row. However, two forces reappear time and again, with new cults rising to replace those that have fallen.

The first of these forces is known as the Scar that Abides (page 156). Those who follow the Scar know almost nothing about the being they worship beyond its name; they are driven by terrible dreams and schizophrenic visions, which advocate cruel and homicidal

behavior. Worshipers of the Scar are terrified of their god and might kill others in the hope of holding the visions at bay.

The second is Belashyrra. Anyone who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check recognizes this as the name of one of the mightiest of the daelkyr. Belashyrra is said to be responsible for the creation of the beholders, and he is known as the Lord of Eyes. Members of his cult speak of eyes watching in the darkness and from the depths. It might be that Belashyrra's psychic powers can touch the mad all the way from Khorvaire. But it's also possible that Belashyrra is no longer trapped beneath Khorvaire. Some among the Gatekeepers fear that although the seals keep the daelkyr trapped in Khyber, they do not prevent creatures from moving within the depths; if this is true, the Lord of Eyes might now be building up forces beneath Xen'drik. This possibility would seem to be confirmed by the Umbragen, a subterranean drow tribe that was recently attacked by a host of aberrations, although it's always possible this army is commanded by a powerful mind flayer or beholder and not a daelkyr lord.

In either case, the Cults of the Dragon Below appear and disappear without warning. They might be temporarily driven from the city, but madness can always strike anew.

THE FAITHS OF RUSHEMÉ

The giants of Rushemé are a loose coalition of nomadic tribes. They are united in their worship of Rushemé, the all-encompassing spirit of the land. However, they believe in gods that stand above Rushemé, mighty beings who laid the foundations of the world using the bones of bound fiends. The Guardians of Rushemé focus on the spirits of the earth, but a few priests among the giants still seek to placate the gods above. Many lesser spirits feature in the giant pantheons, but four stand out.

Ouralon Lawbringer, who gave up his shadow in exchange for knowledge of magic and who shared that knowledge with the titans of Xen'drik. In the present day, the Guardians of Rushemé claim that Ouralon

CHILDREN OF THE DEVOURER?

The doctrine of the Devourer maintains that one must consume an enemy to understand him and that through this act it is possible to take his strength and his knowledge. Perhaps this is only legend. Or perhaps the priests of Shargon's Talon are not humans or elves, but rather a variant of the malenti. When a member of the congregation is deemed worthy, he is brought to the top of the Talon and devoured by a sahuagin acolyte, which takes on his form and his memories. It

is up to the DM to decide whether the newborn malenti combines the skill ranks of sahuagin and victim, or if he merely has sufficient memories to pass as the victim. Alternatively, the victim must be a willing participant in the process, giving his life in the belief that he will live on in the new form. In either case, this event could form the basis of an adventure, should a Devourer-worshiping acquaintance of the adventurers suddenly become a cold fish.

was in fact consumed by his shadow and that those who work arcane magic are equally doomed.

Rowa of the Jungle Leaves, the goddess of life and nature. Rowa is much beloved, but she is given to fits of passion that can drive her into a rage. As a result, storms, wildfires, and other natural disasters are attributed to "Rowa's wrath."

Banor the Bloody Spear, the god of the hunt and of the role of the giant within the natural world. Ouralon is the lord of law and magic. Rowa is the goddess of the wild. Banor is the bridge between the two, the guide who shows civilized people how to live in harmony with nature. When giant fights giant, Banor takes on the aspect of war, but it is a role he plays with great sorrow.

Karrak the Final Guardian, the Keeper of the Dead. The giants say that Karrak measures each life at the moment of death, considering past deeds and the unfulfilled destiny of the soul. He saves the worthy souls from disappearing into the greater whole of Rushemé, preserving them in his realm until they are needed on Eberron once again.

The missionaries of the Sovereign Host claim that these are just different names for Aureon, Arawai, Balinor, and the Keeper, with aspects of Dol Dorn, the Shadow, and the Devourer woven in. And indeed, giant priests can choose from the domains and favored weapons of these deities, though priests of Rowa and Banor often become druids. Regardless of this, the giants of Rushemé point out that their traditions are older than human civilization, and that if anyone is confused about the nature of the divinity, it's more likely to be humanity than giantkind.

THE TRAVELERS

"Beware the gifts of the Traveler." That proverb dates back to Sarlona, and every culture that worships the Traveler has a variation. It's a simple premise: A stranger's gift might hold hidden danger, and seeming

good fortune might have unforeseen consequences. Those who worship the Traveler take a different view. They see their deity as the Sovereign of innovation, change, and evolution. Innovation always has a price, and evolution is a struggle in which only the strong survive. But the Travelers respect that, and they believe that only this chaos can produce an ideal world.

The cult of the Traveler has had followers in Stormreach since the days of the giants. There were Travelers among the gnomes who settled the land only to vanish, and Travelers among the smugglers. The cult has a following within House Cannith, and this sect is especially strong in Xen'drik. Many within the house believe that the inspiration that led to the creation of the warforged was a gift of the Traveler, as demonstrated by the troubles presented by the new race. These Cannith faithful believe that more wonders are to be found in Xen'drik—challenges that will test humanity to its limits, and beyond.

Followers of the Traveler are scattered across the city. They're hidden in the dragonmarked houses, among the gangs, and possibly even among the Storm Lords. This faith is a secret, and they have no shrine at Temple Row. But within one of the many inns of Stormreach hides a temple to the Traveler. It's up to the DM to decide which of the city's inns holds the shrine; nothing about it suggests its true nature. Whichever inn it is, the staff and the customers are devoted to the Traveler, and they make it their mission to change the life of any travelers who pass through their doors. Change is the gift of the Traveler, and it comes with opportunity and danger. Adventurers who come to the Traveler's inn might overhear a conversation offering a chance for adventure. They might find an old map hidden in a crack in the floor, or have a chance encounter with a former comrade-in-arms or a long-lost relative. A merchant might offer a chance to purchase a powerful magic item. It might be that nothing happens at the inn itself, but that shortly

THE TITANS

Although the faith of the Four and the path of the Guardians are common religions among the giants, another tradition often goes unnoticed by strangers. The giants frequently make burnt offerings of food and precious substances. Visitors assume that these gifts are intended for one of the four deities, but this is a mistake; these offerings are gifts for the titans.

According to myth, the titans were the first giants of Xen'drik. They were beings of tremendous power and wisdom, and the first to master Ouralon's gift of magic. Despite their power, the titans weren't immortal. In time they grew old and death loomed, and because of their cruel and wicked ways, they knew

Karrak wouldn't preserve them and Rushemé would destroy them. Using fearsome magic, they escaped their doom, projecting their spirits to a realm beyond life and death. There they wait, searching for a way to return. The giants of Rushemé believe that the titans will destroy their stunted descendants if they return, and the sacrifices are intended to keep the titans content in their distant realm. It's rumored that some among the giants can actually contact the titans and make bargains with them; if true, this claim could be the basis for pact magic from *Tome of Magic*, with the titans as the vestiges bound beyond life and death.

after the visit the adventurers are framed for a terrible crime. Only one thing is certain—when one crosses the threshold of the Traveler's inn, change is inevitable.

ORDER OF THE EMERALD CLAW

To those who know the Order of the Emerald Claw as merely an outlawed group of extremist Karrns, the city of Stormreach seems far removed from the organization's interests back in Khorvaire. In truth, however, the order's activities and schemes take it all over the globe. Since Xen'drik is of great importance to the lich queen Vol, the order considers it important too. The Emerald Claw has been in Stormreach since the city was a little more than a hideaway for pirates and other criminals. Nevertheless, it didn't develop the semipublic presence it has today until the closing years of the Last War, when the local power structure had fully settled out.

Today, the order has agents of every kind placed at every level of Stormreach society (and possibly among the Storm Lords themselves; see the sidebar). The organization maintains an incredibly complex and secure hierarchy, and those doing the order's bidding in the city are ignorant of the schemes and identities of their own confederates. Only when it suits their superior's needs do these agents' paths cross, and then only under tightly controlled conditions. Despite all the security, it's an easier proposition to get hold of a member of the order in Stormreach than almost anywhere on Khorvaire. After all, they have a public meeting place, the existence and location of which is a mere DC 15 Gather Information check away for a character.

THE BLACK FREIGHTER

It's common knowledge that if one has business with the Emerald Claw, the Black Freighter is the place to go, and equally common knowledge that one probably shouldn't go looking for a fight there. Not only will the numerous fanatical warriors of the Claw gladly accommodate, but so will the Karrnathi militia, who don't take kindly to troublemakers intruding on their territory, and the various and sundry other Karrns who patronize the tavern.

Known to locals as simply "the Freighter," the Black Freighter was built atop a piece of unusual architecture left behind from when the thri-kreen ruled the area that would one day become the city of Stormreach. It sits in the water in Southwatch, and despite its reputation outside that district, hosts a packed house every time it opens its doors. The base of the structure—the piece of thri-kreen architecture—is a vaguely hull-shaped piece of almost indestructible, yet strangely buoyant, green stone. The bar was built inside and atop this "hull," and all visitors must walk a plank (which is withdrawn every dawn when the bar closes) to gain admittance.

Technically speaking, the order has no claim over the establishment. But everyone knows that its proprietor is friendly to the order's cause and membership at best, and an involved and important part of the order's Stormreach operation at worst. A ribald and garrulous seadog named Smargat runs precisely the sort of place that would appeal to Karrnath's criminal element. The food is the traditional cuisine of working-class Karrns, the drink flows steady and cheap, and the air is thick with Karrnathi verse, from the most raucous sea shanty to the most somber of ballads that stoke the fires of nationalism in the heart of every Karrn.

THE BLOODY COIN

The mystery of which one of the four Coin Lords is sympathetic to Vol remains an exercise for the DM to determine, based on the needs of the campaign; the aim of this book isn't to spoil the fun in that particular regard. In the event that the DM does decide to place Vol's tendrils amid the Storm Lords, he must decide what sort of impact the scenario has on the greater story of the city. In order to decide that, he has to answer two questions.

Which of the Coin Lords is it? Each Coin Lord has a unique set of motives and resources and each will likely respond to personal feelings on the faith in different ways than the others. If the DM decides it is Paulo Omaren, a female human with a powerful ally at the local Deneith enclave, then a different set of doors open for Vol and her various local agents than if the Seeker turns out to be

Yorrick Amanatu, the dwarf with long-standing ties to House Kundarak.

What is the extent of the Coin Lord's attachment? If the DM decides that the Coin Lord is serious about Vol, then the lich queen has a directly manipulable friend in a very high place in the city. If, however, the character's interest is largely private or unexplored, that fact will more subtly alter the scope of the effect on the broader issues of city finance and politics.

Regardless of whom the DM decides to place into the role, or even to what extent the character is willing to further Vol's agenda, it's important to remember that no Coin Lord would be so foolish as to truly and seriously jeopardize his or her own standing in the city, regardless of other ties. In all cases, the DM should take care to characterize the chosen Coin Lord's dealings appropriately.



Captain Smargat

Even though his “ship” is nothing more than a tavern on the water, Smargat likes to play up the theatrical element of his establishment and has a tendency to refer to himself as captain. His demeanor might be disarming, but only the most foolhardy would believe the proprietor of the Black Freighter utterly ignorant of the Emerald Claw’s activities in Stormreach; even so, some might be surprised to learn just how involved he really is. The order uses Smargat’s presence and reputation as a double blind, playing on the natural suspicions of its enemies to dismiss a figure as public as Smargat as anything but a pawn. Order superiors do keep the details of specific plans and missions secret from Smargat, but this is done mostly to protect him. What he does accomplish for the order goes above and beyond what even the most suspicious of Stormreachers would expect, given the circumstances.

Running the Black Freighter is a greater service to the order than most would assume. Smargat especially enjoys the rumor that his tavern is capable of unmooring and sailing itself downriver, since the truth is entirely the opposite: The original piece of thri-kreen architecture was built into and affixed fully to the riverbed. Secret hatches connect it to the ruins beneath the city, and Smargat uses them to move agents of the order at all hours of day and night. So although the Freighter appears as a “false” headquarters for the Emerald Claw, it’s actually much closer to a real base of operations for the order (or at least the hub that connects several different bases of operations). And as if running the Freighter wasn’t enough, Smargat also assists in both dirty work and coordinating other agents of the order throughout the city. His distinctive tricorn hat is a *hat of disguise*, and Smargat’s superiors have used its power to great effect over the years. For his part, Smargat is all too thrilled to help and considers it an honor to be asked to perform any function, no matter how small, for the Emerald Claw.

The White Raven

Smargat’s superior in the Emerald Claw, and the closest thing the order has to a single leader in Stormreach, is a notorious figure known on the Stormreach streets as the White Raven. The name comes from the pet bird that’s almost always seen perched on or near its master, and which is sometimes sent to either presage its owner’s arrival or pass along a silent message. In truth, the White Raven is just a person with a real name (“Dedrick Beynar”), but to call him ordinary would be overstating the case. Beynar is a shrewd and experienced arcane investigator sworn to the service of Vol herself. Beyond this, he is a master swordsman and his notoriety in certain circles is due in no small part to the infamy he’s garnered through the growing account of his many successful duels. Once he has accepted and

begun a duel, nothing short of a direct command from Vol will make him stand down or offer mercy to his opponent. Beynar looks older than he is, having gone prematurely gray, and he prefers to accentuate both his maturity and notoriety by dressing in hand-tailored suits of white linen stitched with darkweave.

Beynar might be the boss where the rank and file of the Emerald Claw are concerned, but even the White Raven does the bidding of another. He carries with him an amulet given to him by Vol herself, and it acts as both a focus for her scrying magic and a means by which she can communicate with him over great distances. He doesn't know that Vol has provided Lady Miravella, the head of the local House Thuranni enclave, with the means to make use of the amulet as well. The elf keeps tabs on Beynar's activities without his knowledge, though she does not abuse the privilege.

For more on the White Raven and House Thuranni, see page 152.

DEDRICK BEYNAR, THE WHITE RAVEN CR 11

Male human expert 1/hexblade^{CW} 5/kensai^{CW} 6
LE Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17; **Dodge**, **Mobility**, **deflection**
hp 102 (12 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11; **arcane resistance** +3, **mettle**

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee weapon rapier +17/+12 (+19/+14 against humans)
(1d6+4/15–20, 1d6+6 plus 2d6 against humans)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10

Atk Options power surge

Special Actions hexblade's curse (2/day)

Hexblade Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (1/day)—*disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16

SQ *ki* projection, familiar (white raven)

Feats Combat Casting^B, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Elusive
Target^{CW}, Mobility, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +11, Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +5, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +6, Forgery +5, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Ride +9, Sense Motive +7, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +5, Spot +8

Possessions +3 *humanbane keen deflecting*^{CW} rapier (signature weapon), +2 *glamered darkleaf chain shirt*, *deck of illusions* (minus ace of spades), *ring of mind shielding*, Emerald Claw amulet, identification papers (three different sets), "Klausz" (the familiar)

Arcane Resistance (Su) Dedrick has a +3 bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects.



Hexblade's Curse (Su) Twice per day, Dedrick can curse a visible foe within 60 feet, bestowing a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saves, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for 1 hour. Will DC 16 negates. Any spell that removes or dispels curses ends the effect instantly.

Mettle (Ex) If Dedrick makes a successful Will or Fortitude save against an attack that would normally have a lesser effect on a successful save (such as any spell with a saving throw entry of Will half or Fortitude partial), he instead negates the effect.

Power Surge (Ex) As a move action, Dedrick can make a DC 15 Concentration check to gain a +8 bonus to Strength for 3 rounds. Each time after the first that he calls upon this ability in a 24-hour period, the check DC increases by 5.

Withstand (Ex) Dedrick can make a Concentration check in lieu of a Reflex save to avoid taking the full effect of any area spell.

Hook "I distrust a close-mouthed man. He picks the wrong time to talk and says the wrong things."

CAPTAIN SMARGAT

CR 8

Male human ranger 3/fighter 5

CN Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common, Giant

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; **Dodge**, Two-Weapon Defense

hp 68 (8 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 flail +9/+4 (1d8+6) and
+1 flail (1d8+4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Power Attack, favored enemy monstrous humanoids +2

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12

SQ wild empathy

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (flail), Weapon Specialization (flail)

Skills Appraise +3, Bluff +6, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +6, Survival +7

Possessions two +1 flails, +2 chain shirt, hat of disguise

Hook "You better be sure you're in the right establishment, mate."

OTHER PATRONS AND ENEMIES

None of these secret forces have an active presence in Stormreach, and it's possible that they aren't present

at all. But any of them could be lingering in the shadows, and any of them could serve as a valuable ally or dangerous foe.

THE AURUM

The Aurum claims to be a society for wealthy students of history. As such, it is hardly surprising that it maintains a small chapterhouse in Stormhaven, where experienced explorers are invited to speak about their experiences. Jaris Cantar (NE male human aristocrat 3/rogue 3), a shipping magnate who runs a trading fleet under license to Lyrandar, owns the lodge. Cantar has a great interest in drow relics, especially those tied to the Sulatar or Umbragen cultures, and pays a premium price—at least 10% more than an adventurer would get in the Marketplace—for such things. Cantar has deep pockets, and he might be willing to finance expeditions into the interior for a share of the goods reclaimed on the trip.

Three members of the Platinum Concord reside in Stormreach, including Jaris Cantar, and twelve members of the Gold Concord. Most are entrepreneurs or collectors, interested in the opportunities that lie in the interior; others are the descendants of the pirate captains bullied into submission by the first Storm Lords. Next to Cantar, the most influential voice is that of Guldán Soldorak (LE male dwarf aristocrat 4/warrior 2), a gold baron from the Mror Holds who settled in Stormreach to indulge his fascination with the sahuagin. Guldán is an expert on sahuagin history and has amassed a fascinating collection of relics from the depths. Recently he has joined the Cult of the Devourer (page 82); if a malenti were to take the place of the Platinum Concordian, it would give the sahuagin an influential voice on land.

The Aurum has another weapon in Stormreach, the gang known as the Golden Lions (page 72). Many of the gang's members are children of Aurum families; Jacques the Hook is actually Jacques Cantar. Adventurers could easily be employed by a Concordian, but if they become an obstacle, they might be "fed to the Lions."

THE CHAMBER

Dragons avoid Stormreach for many reasons, from ancient evils hidden in the depths to the possibility of powerful traps left behind from the dragon-giant war. The Chamber wants to keep an eye on the city, but it typically uses human agents to accomplish this goal. If adventurers earn the trust of the Chamber, they might be called upon to serve in Stormreach. Missions for the Chamber could involve battling the Lords of Dust, disarming threats left behind by the ancient giants, or exploring the depths to monitor what lies below. If the adventurers have no connection to the Chamber, they could run afoul of Chamber agents when their innocent dungeon crawls threaten to release an ancient evil.

THE DREAMING DARK

The Devourer of Dreams and the other members of the Circle of Night wish to learn more about the war between the giants and the quori of the past. What weapons and defenses did the giants develop during this conflict? What can they learn about the last age of Dal Quor, before the rise of the Dreaming Dark? Are their traps in the city that could capture quori? Could there be prisoners from the last age—quori spirits that have been bound for almost forty thousand years?

The lords of the Dreaming Dark are master manipulators, and any gang, militia, or other organization in the city could be twisted into serving their agenda. On the neutral ground of Xen'drik, the Dreaming Dark doesn't have to be as subtle as it does on Khorvair. It won't allow its activities to be traced to the Riedran consulate, so Lord Katanavash isn't privy to the plans of the Circle. But if necessary, the lords can bring a strike team of Inspired assassins to Stormreach or the wilds of Xen'drik; Lord Katanavash can truthfully say that such people have no connection to his government.

THE LORDS OF DUST

The Lords of Dust consist of a loose alliance whose members pursue the interests of their bound overlords. Three of the Lords of Dust are mentioned in this book.

Kashurashan (page 58) is an observer; it has been watching the region for tens of thousands of years and expects to watch for thousands more. As a permanent resident and bored immortal, Kashurashan has a number of little games afoot. Gangs, militias, and individual criminals could all be pawns in Kashurashan's schemes, and drawing adventurers in just adds to the fun. If the true nature of the fiend is revealed, it could cause a power vacuum in the city; is there an heir to fill the void?

Marishantar (page 67) is a tourist who has no long-term interests in Stormreach; it just passes through on assignment. However, it is always interested in making contacts, and if adventurers draw attention to themselves, Marishantar might make an effort to befriend them . . . looking forward to the day when it can use this connection in the service of Sul Khatash.

Lorishto has a clear, active agenda, and adventurers might be brought into conflict with the fiend. The schemes of Lorishto are described on page 156.

SECRET SERVICES

The Last War is still being fought in Stormreach, on however small a scale, and the Five Nations certainly want to know what's afoot. However, the Storm Lords don't care for spies from the Five Nations, and if Kirris Sel Shadra identifies Dark Lanterns, Royal Eyes, or other agents, she quickly arranges an accident for them. As a result, these secret services maintain a low profile. Assignments on behalf of a secret service could involve the kidnapping or assassination of dissidents

or war criminals; the theft of an artifact believed to be vital to national security; or the disruption of a group deemed a threat to one of the nations of Khorvair, such as the Swords of Karrn or Dannel's Wrath. Such an assignment is a good way to make powerful friends in Khorvair, but also carries the risk of making deadly enemies in Stormreach.

THE PRINCE OF DRAGONS

Quite a few powerful spellcasters live in Stormreach. The Dragonhawk of Aundair and Lady Miravella d'Thuranni have skills to rival any wizard in Sharn. But it's said that the greatest mage in Stormreach isn't a human, elf, or gnome. The bards of Stormreach sing of a mighty sorcerer who lives in a hidden lair deep below Stormreach, surrounded by gold and ancient treasures. Tales are told of the heroes and thieves who sought to match wits with the Prince of Dragons, and of the corpses they left behind. These stories are tributes to the mightiest mage of Stormreach—the kobold who calls himself Hassalac Chaar.

Hassalac claims that the blood of dragons flows through his veins, empowering his magic. Perhaps this is the truth. He might be a remarkably skilled kobold sorcerer. Or he could be a half-dragon, a disguised dragon, or even a rakshasa who enjoys the deception. Even his level of skill is a mystery. From the stories it's clear that he is a sorcerer of at least 12th level, but he could be considerably more powerful than that. At the end of the day, Hassalac is a plot device. If it suits the needs of the story, he might be the most powerful mortal sorcerer on Eberron. On the other hand, he could be running an elaborate hoax, using his isolation and the artifacts in his hoard to mimic magic and convince people that he has far greater powers than he actually does.

Whatever the truth about Hassalac's powers, a few solid facts have been established. His lair is hidden somewhere beneath Stormreach. The only way to reach it is through a teleportation gate located in Locksmith Square—and only Hassalac can open this gate. He lives in a maze of tunnels protected with deadly wards and patrolled by magically enhanced lizardfolk and bound elementals. Hassalac is fascinated with dragons, and he has amassed a vast assortment of relics dating back to the dragon-giant conflict and even to the dragons' war against the Overlords of the Age of Demons.

Hassalac jealously guards his hoard and rarely leaves his lair. He might employ adventurers to help him expand his hoard. Alternatively, Hassalac might already possess an artifact the party needs: Can they bargain with the prince, or will they risk their lives to try to rob him?

Other adventures could turn on the true nature of the Prince of Dragons. When the PCs learn that both the Chamber and the Lords of Dust want Hassalac dead, will they choose a side and help with the assassination? Or will they try to find out what makes the kobold such an important target?



"Complete this task and all your sins will be lifted," Gaulronak said. "May all the spirits watch over you."



At least one spirit was watching. Its mistress would want to know about this.



MEMBERS ONLY

Whether born to the city or newly romanced by its wild lifestyle and rough and tumble ways, adventurers who call Stormreach home are unlike any others. Stormreach's rampant and casual criminality, its location on the razor's edge of civilization, its ties to ancient cultures, and its reputation as a haven for exiles and war criminals create a unique urban landscape. In a city as dangerous as Stormreach, safety is found only in numbers. Groups of like-minded villains, heroes, or neutral parties provide a DM with interesting options and allow the players to become a part of something greater than their individual objectives. Several powerful organizations act inside the city proper, any of which might serve as allies of or foils to the PCs. Some of these—the Blackwheel Company, Cabal of Shadows, Covenant of Light, and Crimson Codex—are more interested in leading expeditions into Xen'drik than affecting the balance of power in the city. Others, such as the Bilge Rats and the Hollow Shards, are closely bound to the underworld of Stormreach. Whether the PCs join these organizations or battle them, these groups can have a significant impact on any Stormreach campaign.

All of these group writeups include information usable by players. However, the organizational details are aimed primarily at Dungeon Masters, and players who wish to preserve a sense of mystery should avoid these sections.

BILGE RATS

"No, no, let's go the other way. I don't like the Harbor after dark."

—Aergaard the Brave, adventurer

There is a saying in Stormreach: "Everyone is afraid of someone." For many in the city, "someone" is the Rats. As members of one of the oldest and most powerful gangs in the city, the Bilge Rats have run the Harbor district for decades. No one does business along the waterfront without giving the Rats a taste, and nobody crosses them on their home turf and gets away with it. Every couple of years an up-and-coming gang makes

a power play against the Rats, and every couple of years a bunch of well-gnawed bones get dumped in the harbor.

The Rats plan to grow stronger through aggressive growth. They are working to strengthen their ties to the Boromar Clan of Sharn. Head Rat Cartha intends to become the Boromar's counterpart in Stormreach, eventually controlling the entire city's underworld.

JOINING THE BILGE RATS

Most Bilge Rats are rogues, though anyone who proves useful and loyal to the gang is allowed to petition for membership. Trial periods for interested members are as short as a month or as long as a year.

Entry Requirements

Type: Humanoid.

Skill: Intimidate 3 ranks.

Class Feature: Sneak attack +1d6 or sudden strike +1d6.

Special: In order for you to receive the Gift, a Gifted Rat must personally vouch for you.

The Bilge Rats' secret to success is simple—the Rats are monsters in every sense of the word. The gang's higher-ranking members are infected with lycanthropy, which they refer to as "the Gift." They are wererats, feral and cunning creatures with an instinctive feel for the shadows of the city. Dealing with most gangs in Stormreach means facing off against some young toughs. A sit-down with the Rats means confronting creatures that would just as soon gnaw off your face as cut you a deal.

The Bilge Rats keep their disease hidden from the general public. The Silver Flame has little influence in Stormreach, but knowledge of the presence of a powerful and dangerous group of wererats at the heart of a major city could be the bridge that mends the gap between Stormreach and Flamekeep, and the last thing the Rats want is a sudden influx of templar rat-hunters. At the same time, they let enough gruesome rumors circulate in the underworld to keep their enemies nervous. The few associates of the Rats who know the true nature of the gang keep their



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One way or another, everyone gives face to the Bilge Rats

mouths shut. Revealing the truth could cause trouble for the Bilge Rats—but it would likely be the last thing the informer would do.

Because of this need to conceal their lycanthrope nature, Bilge Rats spend most of their time in human or dire rat form, using hybrid form only when alone or dealing with people who are about to die. The Harbor district has a significant dire rat population, allowing the Rats to use this form without drawing significant attention. Dire rat pets (a few of whom might be other Bilge Rats in dire rat form) always accompany upper-ranking gang members. The gang's reputation for feeding its enemies to these rats is well established, another tool for concealing its true nature.

People who brush the Rats the wrong way end up in a gutter with their lips, eyes, nose, and cheeks chewed away. Residents of the Harbor call this "giving face," and people who don't pay the gang respect in word and deed do so instead with the tender flesh of their features. Those in the know along the waterfront commonly whisper: "You let the Rats save face, and you get to save your own."

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Bilge Rats.

AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER

CRITERION

One-Time

Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Control Shape 5 or more ranks	+1
Sneak attack +3d6 or sudden strike +3d6	+1
Gather Information 5 or more ranks	+1
Intimidate 5 or more ranks	+2

Multiple Use

Slay an enemy of the Rats	+1/8 creature's CR
Pull off a smuggling heist worth at least 5,000 gp	+1
Neutralize a gang infringing on the Harbor	+2
Allow someone to publicly disrespect you	-1
Allow someone to publicly disrespect the Rats	-2
Allow non-Rats criminal activity in the Harbor	-2
Associate with any follower of the Silver Flame	-2
Disobey a higher-ranking Rat	-2
Cause the death of a Gifted Rat	-4
Kill a member of the Circle of Plague	-8

PLAYING A BILGE RAT

The gang is your life, your family, and your pack. Your fellow Rats give you a steady place in the chaos of Stormreach's mean streets. You get respect because you're a Rat, but you have to earn it every day. Intimidation is the gang's specialty, and you do your part to terrorize the Rats' enemies. Keep people afraid, and they'll never rise against you. Threaten, make examples out of agitators, and send strong messages to any who oppose you and yours. Strangers don't know you except by the reputation of the gang . . . and they don't know if you are dock vermin or a Gifted Rat.

You are part of the food chain and must accept your place with the Rats. You take care of them, and they take care of you. Failure never goes unpunished, but neither does hard work go unnoticed. Serve loyally, and you get the Gift. Betray the Circle of Plague, and you end up as its next meal.

The Gift changes you forever. From then on, you are a Rat to the bone and core of your soul. Once you are bitten, the disease festering in your veins assures your loyalty. Your thoughts are never human again . . . even your dreams are those of a rat. You no longer question your superiors, since the desire and will to question is no longer in your nature. If your life can save the pack, you sacrifice it without thought or hesitation. You hope to rise high through service to the pack and someday enter the Circle of Plague to command your lessers.

Combat

A stand-up fight is for the arena, and for fools who have something to prove. You don't believe in honorable

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–3	Petitioner with no benefits.
4–10	Dock Vermin: +2 bonus on Move Silently and Hide checks in the Harbor. Must bring in at least 100 gp a week in earnings for the Circle of Plague.
11–15	Wharfboss: +4 bonus on Gather Information checks in the Harbor. You are placed in charge of a gang of 1d4 dock vermin (2nd-level rogues) who serve at your whim. Manage a section of the waterfront for the Rats and kick up at least 1,000 gp a week in earnings.
16–22	Gifted Rat: You are granted the Gift: bitten by Cartha and infected with lycanthropy. You become an infected wererat and your alignment shifts to neutral evil. You can now punish or even kill dock vermin and wharfbosses without fear of repercussions. You must kick up 2,000 gp a week in earnings, though now you can muscle it out of your lessers. You must handle any serious opposition to the gang.
23 or higher	Captain: +2 to hit with sneak attacks, +4 on Intimidate checks. You can vouch for a wharfboss member and increase his or her affiliation score by 4. This is a one-time bonus per member. If anyone you vouch for proves incompetent or a traitor, you take a –6 penalty to your own affiliation score. You are now considered for membership in the Circle of Plague.
Invitation only	Circle of Plague: Lesser Bilge Rats gladly give their lives to protect you. You receive 2,000 gp a week from the gang's activities. You must keep vigilant against the Rats' myriad enemies.

combat, and you prefer to fight with a tremendous advantage over your enemy. Like the vermin of your namesake, you overrun your foes with superior numbers, and you ambush them from the depths and the dark. The best fight is one in which the enemy is dead before he has a chance to draw his blade or cast a spell.

Advancement

The Circle of Plague extracts payment in both gold and loyalty. If you pay in hearty shares of both, there is no limit to how high you can rise with the Rats, but you are only as good as your last week's earnings. If the

amount of earnings you kick up to the Circle starts to slip, you might just take a fall. Maintaining lucrative rackets or taking initiative against the Rats' foes are the two fastest ways to work up the gang's ranks.

Once you get your bite and become a Gifted Rat, advancement becomes more about the pack's well being. You fill positions as they become available and the more successful the gang gets, the more high-ranking positions are created to manage new turf and rackets.

Missions

The Bilge Rats have a few staple rackets that serve as the bread and butter of the gang. They shake down smugglers and waterfront shopkeepers for a take of their action. They waylay drunken visitors carousing in the Harbor district. And they steal goods from warehouses and ships—never taking enough to push the Storm Lords to action, just “claiming their cut.” Now and then a Rat might be called upon to do something more bloody, such as heavy lifting (see the “Rat Speak” sidebar) or culling a traitor from the teeming ranks of the dock vermin. Earning one's keep is necessary, but more important service to the gang lies in actively squeezing out its enemies.

Rats keep their ears to the docks and listen closely to the wind and the waves. Savvy Rats spend a good deal of time spying on their enemies and keeping abreast of the ebbs and flows of the smuggling tide. The gang's network of informants is extensive—nothing happens in the Harbor without the Rats catching wind of it.

Members of the gang are also sent to lean on Guard members who won't look the other way, or dole out bloody punishment to people who refuse to pay up their dues. The Rats stand aloof from much of the underworld turmoil in Stormreach, cemented in place at the top by their longstanding reputation for ruthless payback whenever their interests are challenged.

When competition rears its ugly head members are dispatched to handle it swiftly. As an opening (and often final) salvo, the Rats send a message by slaughtering a few members of the opposition and returning their bloody rat-gnawed bones in a sack.

THE BILGE RATS IN STORMREACH

“My uncle used to run ships across the Thunder Sea. Bolts of silk mostly, and giant pottery shards on the way back. He refused to pay the Rats protection. His ship burned down to the waterline, and they never found him or his crew.”

—Aldriss Rams, dockworker

The Bilge Rats are most often encountered in the Harbor district. The PCs might run afoul of them along the wharfs where they collect dues from ship captains, ship-owners, and merchants. The Rats might even target a ship the PCs have an interest in for some heavy lifting. A friend or relative of the PCs (or one of the characters) might start a business in the Harbor or

get involved in the shipping trade, thus bringing that person to the Rats' attention. If the PCs investigate any crime in the Harbor district, they end up sticking their noses in the Rats' affairs and can expect immediate repercussions.

It's worth noting that natural lycanthropes—such as the one that originally infected Cartha—are too aware of persecution from the Church of the Silver Flame to gather in such numbers in one place. The Bilge Rats are young and arrogant, and with the tacit sanction of the Storm Lords, they think that they can run free without restriction. Should the church truly become aware of the extent of the infection, the Bilge Rats would swiftly discover otherwise.

Structure

The Rats call their lowest echelon “dock vermin” for one simple reason: They’re a silver piece a dozen. Every two-copper rogue in Stormreach nurtures a dream of someday becoming a Gifted Rat, and the Circle of Plague encourages these would-be members. First, it never hurts to have a plentiful supply of fodder available for messy jobs and bloody turf wars. Second, every vermin has to kick gold up to the top, and the more vermin, the more money comes in. Finally, the inevitable competition among the mass of rogues reveals the vermin who have true potential, and the Rats pick out the diamonds in the rough, promoting them to wharfbosses.

The Circle of Plague doesn't care how dock vermin earn their keep, as long as they obey two simple maxims: Don't attract attention from the Guard, and don't harass people under the protection of the Rats. Those who fail to obey these two rules have short careers as both Rats and living creatures. All vermin kick up their shares through the wharfbosses, and they never meet a Gifted Rat face to face.

Wharfbosses have more responsibilities. They are the human face of the Rats to the outside world. All dealings with ships, shops, merchants, and the Stormreach Guard are conducted through them. The bosses keep tabs on the steady smuggling operations with long-term associates. All rising Rats do their time on the wharfs before they get their Gift, and it is not the highlight of their career. A lot of paperwork and headaches are involved in maintaining the steady business interests of the Rats. A member who proves

his fortitude and loyalty during his time as a wharfboss has a high likelihood of promotion.

Above the wharfbosses, every member of the gang is a wererat. Rats are “promoted” by infection, each one brought before Cartha to receive his special bite.

No one outside the Gifted Rats knows that the Circle of Plague exists. To the outside world and the lower ranks of the gang, the members of the Circle of Plague appear no different from the rest of the captains and Gifted Rats. The only high-profile member of the Circle is Cartha, who is recognized on the streets as the gang's undisputed leader. The Circle is the soul of the rats, with Cartha the source of the magical disease that binds the gang together. He is the only member of the gang capable of passing the Gift on to others, and if he was eliminated, the Bilge Rats would wither and die.

The Bilge Rats are internally stronger than the other gangs of the city, thanks to the loyalty instilled by the disease. The members of other gangs backstab their way through the ranks and feed on their own, weakening the entire organization. Not so among the Rats, where a lesser simply does not raise his hand against a higher-ranking member.

NPC Reactions

Mention of the Rats elicits whispered fear and loathing. Only the truly stupid are not wary of the Rats, and the citizens of Stormreach maintain a healthy dose of fear and caution when it comes to the city's most vicious gang. Other criminals view the Rats with a mixture of hateful envy and genuine admiration. To most members of the Guard, the Rats are a permanent scar on the Harbor, a necessary evil that cannot be expunged. Truth be told, the downfall of the Rats might be the worst thing that could happen to the Harbor's criminal scene. The bloody rush to fill their power void would seriously disrupt Stormreach's thriving shipping trade.

Head Rat: Cartha

By the time he was seventeen, Cartha was an assassin for hire, murdering ship hands and wharfmasters in the Harbor for 20 gold pieces each. Already a natural killer and a valued member of the Bilge Rats, Cartha's natural tendencies were sharply enhanced when he was infected with lycanthropy. Even though he is an

PC RATS

Seeking high rank among the Bilge Rats is not recommended for PCs due to the curse of lycanthropy and the resulting alignment shift, but there are plenty of story possibilities for a novice PC Rat. A young rogue might have been inducted at a young age, only to discover the true nature of his organization.

He could dedicate himself to bringing down the wererats from within, or to rescuing other young recruits before they're given the Gift. Either would require the character to play a very dangerous game, constantly running the risk of discovery by the rest of the Rats.

afflicted wererat rather than a natural lycanthrope, his bite is incredibly potent and capable of infecting others, and he quickly used his newfound abilities to dominate the Rats and create the Circle of Plague.

Few outside the gang know Cartha is a wererat, but many suspect he is no mere human. An oft-recounted tale in the Harbor concerns a night when eight members of the now-defunct Stingrays ambushed Cartha. He left all eight dead, three with their throats torn out. Cartha emerged from the fray without a scratch on him.

CARTHA (HYBRID FORM)

CR 10

Male human wererat rogue 5/assassin 3

NE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +12, **Spot** +5

Languages Common, Dwarven, Goblin

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 13

hp 50 (9 HD)

Resist evasion, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/silver
Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 dagger +10 (1d4+3) and
+1 dagger +9 (1d4+3) and
bite +8 (1d4+1 plus curse of lycanthropy)

Ranged mwk dagger +8 (1d4+2) and
mwk dagger +8 (1d4+1)

Atk Options death attack (DC 16), curse of lycanthropy,
sneak attack +3d6, spells

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Abilities Str 14, Dex 23, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ alternate form, lycanthropic empathy, trapfinding,
trap sense +1

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Iron Will,
Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus
(dagger)

Skills Balance +11, Bluff +7, Climb +13 (+15 ropes), Dis-
guise +9 (+11 act in character), Escape Artist +12 (+14
ropes), Hide +16, Intimidate +14, Jump +9, Knowledge
(local) +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +16, Open Lock +9,
Search +5, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot
+5, Swim +13, Tumble +14, Use Rope +7 (+9 bindings)

Possessions +2 dagger, +1 dagger, +2 studded leather armor, boots of
elvenkind, 6 masterwork daggers, tattered gray cloak and
cowl, stained tunic, black sash, a plain ivory ring (5 gp,
trophy from his first hit)

In dire rat form, Cartha has the following changed
statistics:

Small

AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 14

Melee bite +14 (1d4+2 plus curse of lycanthropy)
no weapon attacks

Grp +3

Skills Hide +20

Possessions none

In human form, Cartha has the following changed
statistics:

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17

Melee no bite attack

Skills Climb +7, Swim +7

NEW FEATS

Members of the Bilge Rats have access to the following
feats. At the DM's option, any other Stormreach native
can also take them.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

You come from a long line of pirates, outlaws, or sneak
thieves. Your instincts are bent toward illicit gain and
self-preservation above all else.

Benefit: Bluff, Open Lock, and Sleight of Hand
are all considered class skills. In addition, when
observing an individual, you can make a DC 15 Sense
Motive check to ascertain any criminal motives. You
also gain a +4 bonus on Gather Information checks
involving crime and criminals.

Special: You must take this feat at 1st level.

HARDENED CRIMINAL

You've done hard time on the unforgiving streets. You
know how to knuckle down and get the caper done
regardless of the obstacles, and your steely gaze can
meet anyone's eye without flinching.

Prerequisite: Iron Will.

Benefit: You cannot be intimidated. (Attempts
to use the Intimidate skill against you always fail.) In
addition, you can take 10 on any checks with one skill
chosen at the time you take this feat, even under condi-
tions when taking 10 would normally be impossible.

MASTER PICKPOCKET

In Stormreach, there are thieves and there are masters
of the craft. You fall into the latter category. You can
steal anything from anyone at any time.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Sleight of Hand 8 ranks.

Benefit: Your mastery of Sleight of Hand allows
you to steal an object from an adjacent opponent in
combat as a standard action without provoking attacks
of opportunity. You can take anything the character
has on his or her person provided it is not held in
hand. If you are in a grapple, you gain a +4 bonus on
the attempt. In addition, when you make a Sleight of
Hand check as a free action, you take a –10 penalty
rather than a –20 penalty on the attempt.

BILGE RAT ENFORCER (HYBRID FORM)**CR 6**

Male human wererat rogue 3/fighter 1

NE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +6, **Spot** +4**Languages** Common**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15**hp** 30 (5 HD)**Resist** evasion; **DR** 5/silver**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** +1 dagger +6 (1d4+3) and

mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2) and

bite +1 (1d4+1)

Ranged mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2) and

mwk dagger +6 (1d4+1)

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +4**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12**SQ** alternate form, lycanthropic empathy, trapfinding, trap sense +1**Feats** Iron Will, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)**Skills** Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +7, Escape Artist +10, Hide +9, Intimidate +13, Jump +9, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +4, Swim +7, Tumble +11**Possessions** +1 dagger, masterwork studded leather armor, 4 masterwork daggers, gray cloak and cowl, black sash

In dire rat form, a Bilge Rat enforcer has the following changed statistics:

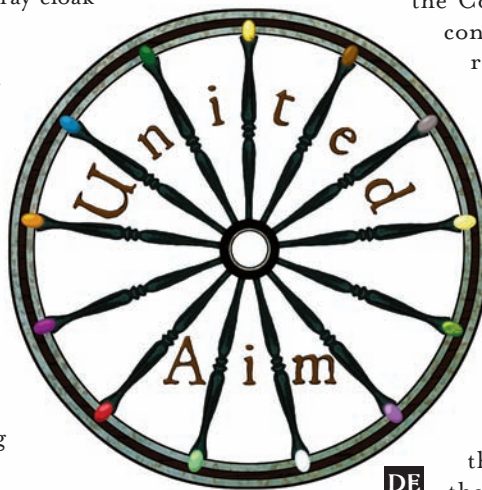
Small

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13**Melee** bite +6 (1d4+2)

no weapon attacks

Grp +0**Skills** Hide +5**Possessions** none

In human form, a Bilge Rat enforcer has the following changed statistics:

Melee no bite attack**Skills** Climb +5, Swim +5**Blackwheel symbol****BLACKWHEEL COMPANY***"Xen'drik? Full of nothing but fools and primitives. They wouldn't know a professional fighting force if it deployed a tactical flanking gambit at high noon."*—Lieutenant Commander Danforth,
Blackwheel Company

Following the gaping hole in military service created by the Treaty of Thronehold, a small corporation formed to take advantage of the military expertise and discipline now lying fallow. Mackinnon "Mace" Maceck, a dwarf entrepreneur and former Cyran battlefield commander, created a transportation and security firm to contract out to the highest bidder. Under his charismatic influence, soldiers, adventurers, and support personnel from every corner of Khorvaire found gainful employment at the end of the war.

The Blackwheel Company began by taking the jobs that no other organization, including the dragon-marked houses, would touch. Clandestine smuggling missions into areas deemed too dangerous to risk valuable house or national resources became the company's calling card.

As the company grew in reputation and prowess, the dragonmarked houses elected to commandeer this rising military power. A special meeting of the Committee of Twelve (ECS 246) was convened, and the houses pooled their resources to essentially buy out the Blackwheel Company. By retaining their services indefinitely and exclusively, the Twelve created for itself a military force that could be deployed anywhere in the world to pursue the magical aims of the council.

As the first order of business, the Twelve dispatched the company to the continent of Xen'drik, where Mace established operations under a new flag—a thirteen-spoked wheel surrounding the motto "United Aim," symbolizing the shared interests of the Twelve.

FOUR FACTIONS

The Blackwheel Company is one of four adventurer societies—along with the Cabal of Shadows, the Covenant of Light, and the Crimson Codex—that seek to unlock portions of the draconic Prophecy in Xen'drik. These factions are relatively small and operate primarily within the continent of Xen'drik, although they might have interests

elsewhere in Eberron. Dedicated to discovering—and manipulating—bits of the Prophecy known as the Caldyn Fragments (see page 105), these organizations often find themselves in direct competition. Their conflicts become bloody as the factions mount rival expeditions, racing into the heart of Xen'drik in pursuit of the Prophecy.

The group's current base of operations, a massive airship, provides the company with the mobility and firepower needed to operate in the most inhospitable regions of Xen'drik. The current focus of the company appears to be furthering the arcane research agenda of the Twelve—securing dragonshard deposits, exploring ancient runes, and protecting vital artifacts in and around Stormreach.

JOINING THE COMPANY

Joining the Blackwheel Company is easy for those who are eager to earn coin for their talents. The company's "no questions asked, no able hire turned away" policy has allowed it to develop an impressively diverse membership. It is not uncommon to see gnoll barbarians and goblin rogues serving side by side with noble dragonmarked heirs. The company's various undertakings often require divine or arcane spellcasters, as well as specialized "operatives"—it actively recruits beguilers (*PH2*), warlocks (*CAr*), and members of prestige classes useful to the organization.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Any nonchaotic.

Special: Applicants must officially renounce all previous military affiliations and loyalties to undertake service in the company.

The company takes pride in providing its hires with the best in pay and equipment, so attrition is low. In return, the company demands a certain level of professionalism and discipline. This pragmatic organization finds most of its members among those of neutral alignment, but all are welcome. Hires are free to leave the company at any time, though they are stripped of all benefits.

Blackwheel recruiters can be found throughout Stormreach. The company typically maintains at least one storefront recruitment center for entry-level soldier positions. Rather than run hopefuls through an arduous application process, the company tends to accept whatever an applicant has to offer at face value, and assigns him or her out appropriately. With the backing of the dragonmarked houses, the company has no shortage of funds or equipment. Applicants who cannot cut muster are identified within a few days and simply drummed out of service.

Higher-level recruitment is typically handled in a more private, even covert, manner. Some stories tell of uniquely skilled adventurers being blackmailed or otherwise coerced into taking one-off assignments when a company expedition has a particular niche to fill.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Blackwheel Company.

CRITERION AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER

One-Time

Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Base attack bonus +5 or higher	+1
Former military experience	+1
Proficient in all martial weapons	+1
Two or more combat-related or tactical feats	+1
Member of a dragonmarked house	+2
Have dragonmark of any kind	+4

Multiple Use

Complete a mission on behalf of the Company	+2
Uncover information about the Caldyn Fragments	+2
Defeat or significantly impede rival operation	+2
Disorderly conduct in Stormreach	-1
Publicly associate with rival faction member	-2
Oppose or offend member of a dragonmarked house	-2
Kill another company member	-4
Lose or surrender company asset to rival faction	-4
Disobey order from a superior officer	-4

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–5	Recruit: The Blackwheel Company recognizes you as a member, and you are granted 50 gp/character level for equipment.
6–15	Dragoon: 50 gp/month income. +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks in Xen'drik; +2 circumstance bonus on Gather Information checks in Stormreach. <i>Magic weapon</i> 1/week as spell-like ability. You are assigned to at least one mission per month.
16–23	Mace's Man: 100 gp/month income, plus one-time selection of a single magic weapon of up to 10,000 gp in value from armory. +1 AC bonus when fighting with a company unit. You must command a small squad (2d4 1st-level NPCs) on at least one mission per month.
24–29	Field Sergeant: 200 gp/month income, plus selection of one magic item of up to 30,000 gp in value. Grant allies within 20 feet a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and saving throws. Select one fighter bonus feat. You must organize 1d4 company missions per month, and personally lead one per month.
30 or higher	Lieutenant Commander: 400 gp/month income. As long as you hold this rank, you are considered to have the Favored in House feat with one house of your choice and the Leadership feat with a base score of 15. You can launch major company missions at your discretion.

PLAYING A BLACKWHEEL OPERATIVE

There's a saying among Blackwheel veterans: "No one ever leaves the company." You know the truth in this, in more ways than one. Blackwheel is the only choice for discerning professionals looking for work in Stormreach. The pay is good, the support and equipment unmatched, and the organization as a whole strong and efficient. In the lawlessness of Stormreach, the company provides structure and security—especially for the new recruit. You know how good you have it. Why would anyone leave?

You're also aware of another meaning to that well-worn saying, one that tends to apply higher up the Blackwheel hierarchy. Stick around the company long enough, and you will be privy to valuable secrets and information. In many ways, information is a commodity more valuable than gold. Officially, Blackwheel maintains its policy that operatives are free to leave at any time. Unofficially, it's understood that the company has ways to ensure silence among those who leave service.

Combat

For all practical purposes, the Blackwheel Company functions as a paramilitary force within Xen'drik. The company puts a heavy premium on time-tested martial disciplines, which is reflected in the regular training you receive as a company operative.

As such, you rely on conservative, by-the-book military thinking. Advance strategy is always the key, whether preparing for a minor skirmish or outlining a prolonged expedition to the interior. Tactically, you are trained to function within a unit on the battlefield. The company favors small, efficient strike teams in which professionalism and discipline are used to undermine the enemy's superior numbers or the brute force of Xen'drik's natural predators. In combat, you are always mindful of being part of a team.

Advancement

As long as you remain loyal, diligent, and effective, significant advancement opportunities in the Blackwheel Company are all but assured. In constantly expanding its range of operations, the company needs skilled operatives to participate in and eventually lead the various expeditions mandated by the Twelve. Whatever else it might be, the company is a well-organized operation that fairly rewards initiative and achievement.

You might also be recruited from within the company to serve in one of the many "shadow branches" of Blackwheel. By their very nature, little is known of these specialized units, but you can reasonably expect them to deal with internal surveillance, covert missions against rival factions, and safeguarding the company's most valuable secrets. If you prove yourself trustworthy, especially if you excel in stealth and subterfuge, you might be approached some shadowy evening and invited into the true inner circles of Blackwheel.

Missions

Blackwheel is primarily tasked with recovering information and artifacts relating to the Caldyn Fragments of the draconic Prophecy. In this endeavor, the company competes primarily with three other main factions—the Cabal of Shadows, the Covenant of Light, and the Crimson Codex. Most often, this competition involves racing into the wilds of Xen'drik to beat another expedition to a recently uncovered asset.

As the standing private army of the Twelve, Blackwheel might also deploy resources to serve any objective that is in the collective interest of the dragonmarked houses. You might be ordered to raid an outpost of the Crimson Codex, scout for new dragonshard deposits, or serve as protection on a diplomatic mission to the Riedran outpost of Dar Qat.

THE BLACKWHEEL COMPANY IN STORMREACH

"You don't want to trifle with that table, boyo. They're with the company, connected at heights you and I can only dream of. . . ."

—Siddarth Khellel, tavernkeeper

The Blackwheel Company is deliberately decentralized in Xen'drik, headquartered in a massive airship called *Triskaideka* and designed to mobilize at a moment's notice. Still, most Blackwheel personnel operate out of Stormreach when not on assignment elsewhere.

Company members in the city largely keep to themselves and are careful not to get embroiled in local disputes. The Twelve make certain arrangements with the Storm Lords (who in turn make arrangements with groups such as the Bilge Rats) to ensure that Blackwheel business is not impeded within the city. The company greases a lot of palms in Stormreach, with its many members requiring services both professional and recreational. On the other hand, its relations with other mercenary and transportation companies are often difficult.

Blackwheel is principally interested in Stormreach as a stable port and de facto base of operations, and the group does not traffic in local politics.

Structure

Structure within the Blackwheel Company is militaristic, with clearly defined roles and a chain of command. However, these roles are often mission-specific—depending on the nature and needs of a particular expedition, individual members will sometimes take on different ranks in the chain of command. Blackwheel's ultimate commander-in-chief is Mace, who values discipline and order above all else.

NPC Reactions

Blackwheel members who wish to be publicly identified as such typically wear a brooch or pendant with the company's thirteen-pointed symbol. Because the company is commonly known to be well connected and

well funded, members are afforded due respect by merchants and legitimate citizens. On the other hand, petty thieves and thugs might target lone members or small groups for the same reason, hoping to muscle some free coin and worry about the repercussions later.

BLOODBOUND OF THE RED RING

"Some are sold to it, some are sworn to it, some are born to it . . . but the only way to escape this life is to bathe in gallons of blood. Once you're in the Ring, you come out victorious or not at all."

—Kel Giantsbane, gladiator

The greatest gladiators of the Red Ring are the bloodbound, the warriors who slake Stormreach's thirst for blood sport in brutal battle. They are not casual fighters. Those who wish to dabble in arena combat are invited to do so at the Annual Games held at the Red Ring. The bloodbound are gladiators who pledge their very souls to the Red Ring and serve a stablemaster until the day of their death. Some do it for glory, others because they have no choice.

JOINING THE BLOODBOUND

Warriors, barbarians, rangers, and fighters make up the brunt of the bloodbound, though anyone able to survive the grueling battles of the Red Ring is allowed membership.

Entry Requirements

Skill: Intimidate 3 ranks or Perform 3 ranks.

Special: Unless sold to a stable as a slave, a potential bloodbound must qualify in the Annual Games or a special exhibition match in the Red Ring. He then swears a blood oath to a stablemaster, wearing a brand and a metal collar for the rest of his days.

The Red Ring is unrivaled in its brutality. To satisfy the desperate and demanding masses of Stormreach, a population living on the fringe of a savage continent, the Ring offers sport gruesome enough to satisfy even the most bloodthirsty tastes. Khorvaire's champions come across the Thunder Sea to prove themselves and instead often get sent home in pieces.

Bloodbound are not average gladiators. They face the fiercest horrors Xen'drik's untamed jungles have to offer. The lawlessness of Stormreach allows, and even encourages, grisly contests of strength, sweat, and blood.

All this considered, bloodbound don't survive long without a code and the strictures of the Red Ring's



The minotaur Kolos seeks to bring justice to the Red Ring

Blood Council. Obedience, faith in the stablemasters, and a rigorous regimen of training dominate every bloodbound's life.

The most important distinction made among these gladiators is that between slaves and free bloodbound. Free bloodbound are fewer and fewer every year. Those who have other choices are rarely drawn to a life of constant bloodshed and agony, and the sacrifice made to become a bloodbound is extreme. These days, most stablemasters rely on slaves or recruit condemned criminals from the tribunals.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Bloodbound of the Red Ring.

AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER

One-Time

Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Proficient in all martial weapons	+1
Two or more exotic weapon proficiencies	+2

Multiple Use

Slay fierce monster in the Ring	+1/8 creature's CR
Win an official match	+1
Pin creature two sizes larger in the Ring	+1
Challenge a bloodbound of a higher title	+1
Refuse a challenge	-1
Lose a match	-1
Disobey your stablemaster	-1
Lose to a bloodbound of a lower title	-2
Kill another bloodbound out of the Ring	-2
Kill a member of your own stable	-2
Caught cheating in the Ring	-2
Betray your stablemaster	-8

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1-3	Unsworn with no benefits.
4-10	Gladiator: +2 competence bonus on Intimidate checks. One free exotic weapon proficiency. Must fight in the Ring once a week. No bloodbound, regardless of stable, will oppose you outside the Ring, and you are expected to hold to the same standard.
11-15	Slaughter Master: Penalties for using an improvised weapon, a weapon you lack proficiency in, or an inappropriately sized weapon lessen by 2. A patron gifts you with a magic item of up to 10,000 gp in value. You must fight in a specialty match every week.
16-22	Slayer: +4 on level checks against Intimidate and Will saves against fear effects. A patron gifts you with a magic item of up to 30,000 gp in value. You must face a Crimson Champion in the Ring once a month.
23 or higher	Crimson Champion: +4 bonus on rolls to confirm critical hits. You now have the chance at a title bout with the current Champion of the Ring if your stablemaster can secure a match through the Blood Council.
Win Title Bout	Champion of the Ring: +10 bonus on Intimidate checks in Stormreach. +2 morale bonus on attack rolls and saves when fighting for a crowd of at least twenty people. Must defend title whenever called upon to do so.

PLAYING A BLOODBOUND

You live in the blood-boiling heat of the moment. There is no future, no life after the fight, except to fight again until death takes you. The hum of the creatures of the civilized world surrounding the Red Ring is like the droning of so many insects . . . they are not alive like you are. They have not faced a worthy foe in brutal blood sport to the roaring swell of the crowd.

You are god and slave both. You wear a collar like a dog and serve at the stablemaster's whim, but when you enter the arena, you are the center of the universe. You stand toe to toe with giants, monsters, and other bloodbound in battle fraught with brutality and danger unlike anything mere adventurers can fathom.

Combat

You fight to win, but you also fight for glory. You strive to elicit the best response possible from onlookers as you battle—whether to please the crowds or to terrify foes with the bloody acts you perpetrate upon their allies. You enjoy toying with lesser foes and mangle them in ways that make others think twice about crossing you.

You turn bad situations to your benefit and make the most of any possible advantage. Everything is a weapon: A stack of shelves in an apothecary's shop can be toppled on foes to cover them in narcotic powders and poisons, a gangplank might be splintered to plunge a foe into the brine below, and even a tureen makes a handy buckler in a pinch.

Advancement

Your exploits outside the Red Ring are meaningless. Free bloodbound are not discouraged from adventuring, since stablemasters see their bloodbound come back from Xen'drik's interior far harder and stronger than when they left. Even so, the rest of the bloodbound do not care what you found in the giant ruins or how many beasts you slew there. No kill counts unless it is a kill for the crowd, a sacrifice of blood to the ravening mob of viewers—this is your debt of honor to the Red Ring. Winning bouts in the arena gains you the respect and power needed to become a champion.

Missions

Most often you are called upon to fight in the Red Ring. On occasion a problem might arise, such as someone trying to extort money from your stablemaster, blackmail him, or pursue a personal vendetta of some kind. In these cases you might be called upon to destroy the transgressor.

Though it is rarely exercised, most stablemasters maintain a contract with the Stormreach Guard that allows the Guard to "borrow" a group of bloodbound for dirty muscle-work, intimidation (when a bloodbound's reputation in the Red Ring comes in very

handy), or particularly “wet” (read: bloody) crack-downs. Private militias strive to obtain these contracts as well, though a stablemaster rarely grants them, and militias can rarely afford them.

BLOODBOUND IN STORMREACH

“Don’t look him in the eye, lad. He’s as likely to cave in your face as look back.”

—Friendly advice to a new traveler in Stormreach

Bloodbound slaves rarely leave the arena unless loaned out to the Guard or less reputable organizations as muscle. Free bloodbound can be encountered nearly anywhere in Stormreach. PCs might face bloodbound across the arena or in some darkened alleyway where they serve the characters’ enemies as paid thugs.

Structure

There is little distinction between bloodbound except one—slave or free. The Red Ring is a primary market for the slavers of Darguun; many of the gladiators in the ring are descended from Cyrans captured in the goblinoid conquest of the land. The Code of Galifar forbids slavery, but these laws have no teeth in Stormreach. Few outside the Red Ring make use of slaves, but the Storm Lords have shown little interest in abolishing the practice . . . especially in light of the money the Ring brings to the Blood Council.

Slaves purchased by stablemasters are trained for a life of slaughter and inevitable death in the arena. A slave can become free only if he earns his worth in “favor” from patrons of the Ring. Whether slaves or not, all bloodbound swear an oath to a stablemaster, whom they serve without question.

Individual stables are run according to the whim of their master, but most employ “handlers” to keep control of the slaves and train them for battle. Some of these handlers are the basest scum of Stormreach, who enjoy their roles as vicious taskmasters. Others are retired gladiators too maimed or too aged to continue their careers, who instead pass their skills on to a new generation of bloodbound.

Three stablemasters sit on the Blood Council, the body politic that runs the Red Ring. Dozens of lesser stablemasters clamor at their heels, hoping to one day ascend to the council and claim the respect and wealth that accompanies these highly coveted seats of power.

NPC Reactions

When the bloodbound walk the streets of Stormreach, most people get out of their way. Adventurers and criminals have a reputation for violence, but a bloodbound’s reputation is burned into the minds of hundreds of onlookers every week at the Red Ring. There is no question about their capability for brutality. Some fans of the Red Ring view the bloodbound as living legends and city heroes. Others view them as animals possessing no skill beyond killing.

THE BLOOD COUNCIL

Three stablemasters sit on the council, deciding match-ups, types of bouts, policy for the Ring and the bloodbound, and reaping most of the profits from bouts and special events. Other stablemasters must petition these three for the right to maintain a stable of bloodbound, and wait in hope of their favor when it comes to arranging title bouts and getting their best gladiators competitive matches to increase their standing. The current council members are detailed below.

Malketh Zolark of the Storm’s Fury: The Zolark family built the Red Ring over three hundred years ago and has firmly controlled the blood sport arena ever since. Storm’s Fury, by far the largest and most successful stable in the Ring, has passed from father to son for over ten generations. More than thirty championship belts hang above Malketh Zolark’s hearth, a legacy of blood spilled by gladiators while the Zolarks reaped the fame, glory, and gold.

Malketh (LE male human aristocrat 4/rogue 2) inherited the stable and his seat on the Blood Council after his father died under mysterious circumstances. He is the youngest Zolark to run the stable, but Malketh is a chip off the old block—indomitable, cunning, and firmly planted at the apex of the pyramid of power behind the Red Ring’s weekly gore-fests. His reputation for ruthlessness is growing, and many whisper behind closed doors that Malketh had a hand in his father’s untimely demise.

To Malketh, the bloodbound are little more than assets to be squeezed dry. His coffers are bottomless, his influence in city affairs extensive. Most highly placed personages (including, he claims, two Storm Lords) owe him considerable debts that he collects in “favors.”

Malketh is a handsome, rail-thin, 6-foot-tall human with a mirthless smile and cold blue eyes. He wears gray or black attire at all times. The only accessory Malketh allows is his family signet ring. He abhors color and garish displays of jewelry, and was once heard to say, “Hide your wealth, lest your lessers decide to try to take it from you.”

Ralzina Voraal of the Wyvern’s Tail: Ralzina (NE female half-elf warlock 7) arrived in Stormreach three years ago, with the scent and trappings of old money clinging to her sensuous form as tightly as the silk dresses she favors. Ralzina purchased the financially floundering Wyvern’s Tail from a gnarled old stablemaster named Jarksin, who now serves as handler for the stable. Within months the Wyvern’s Tail rose from the bottom of the lists to one of the most respected stables in the Ring.

Ralzina’s willingness to send her best gladiators and most valuable slaves into harm’s way without a second thought elevated her quickly to the Blood Council. Most stablemasters are careful with their strongest and most powerful bloodbound, grooming

them for title bouts and important matches, but Ralzina ruthlessly threw her most valuable assets into the Ring again and again, apparently indifferent to their chances of survival. Most assume her family's wealth made her unconcerned, but the truth is far more sinister.

Ralzina is a cultist of the Dragon Below. The "brand" with which she marks her bloodbound is actually a potent magic sigil revealed to her in a schizophrenic vision. She believes that the symbol channels the bearer's soul energy into herself upon the bloodbound's death. Whether her bloodbound win or lose, she reaps the benefit, either in gold or souls. Unlike the rest of the stablemasters, Ralzina has no stake whatsoever in the Red Ring or her bloodbound; she's only using her seat on the council to secure as many death matches for her bloodbound as possible.

Ralzina is a beautiful half-elf. She has red hair decorated with silver and sapphire ornaments, large scarlet lips, and green eyes. She favors tight-fitting silk gowns of green or red.

Kolos of the Ivory Horn: Kolos (N male minotaur barbarian 3/fighter 2/expert 3) is the newest member of the Blood Council and the first nonhumanoid to earn a place there. A former slave who fought fiercely for years to earn his freedom, Kolos captured the heart of the crowd. He earned the title of champion by defeating Deathreaver, an ogre blackguard in the Zolark stable, undefeated for two years before Kolos laid him low.

Kolos harnessed his fame and fortune to start his own stable, called the Ivory Horn. The Horn is unique in that every bloodbound in it has a stake in its success. Every purse won is divided among the gladiators in Kolos's care. He also keeps no slaves and is a vocal opponent of the use of slaves in the Red Ring, earning the displeasure of several of his colleagues who rely on slave stock to keep their stables running.

The minotaur champions the rights of nonhumanoid sentients as well. He maintains that these "monsters" are tortured for the entertainment of the viewing elite without receiving any consideration for their agony. His equitable treatment of races viewed as mere beasts or fodder by other stablemasters won several dangerous monsters to his stable and paved the way for his rise to power.

Kolos's recent political maneuverings earned him a seat on the Blood Council but also many enemies. They want to see him eliminated or swept aside, but he is far too popular for obvious foul play. It is widely held

that Malketh offered the minotaur a seat to increase the rancor other stablemasters already felt toward Kolos and potentially provoke one of them to plot the minotaur's downfall.

Kolos is a powerhouse of a minotaur with brilliant crimson fur, shining eyes, and polished horns. He dresses in finery to look the part of a wealthy stablemaster. Close observation reveals frayed threads, patches, and missing buttons on his aristocratic attire, evidence that most of his money goes to his fellow bloodbound in the stable. He rarely covers his slave brand of the now defunct Serpent's Fang stable, an ugly burn scar on his forearm. He prefers to leave it on display as a mark of his triumphs and as inspiration to other bloodbound, proof that any of them can fight their way to similar power and freedom.

CABAL OF SHADOWS

"The Traveler comes. Choose to be the instrument of his change, or a victim of it."

—Shadow Lupae, Child of Xoriat

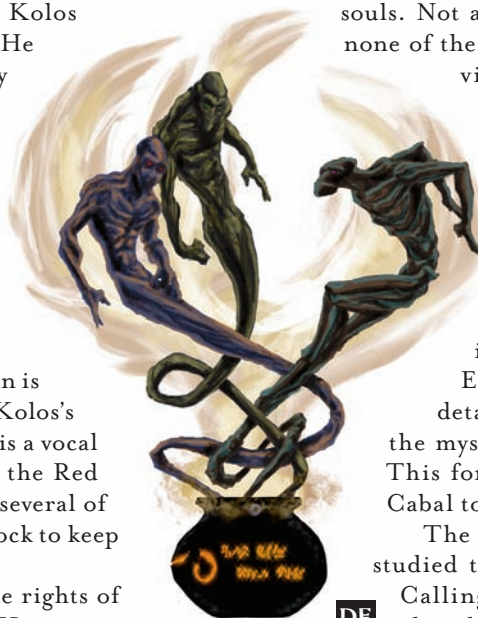
Cast out from their homes, touched by darkness, or consumed by madness and rage, the members of the Cabal of Shadows are a diverse group of troubled souls. Not all of them can be called evil, but none of the Cabal's goals could be considered virtuous. The Caldyn Fragments speak of a time of shadow and change when a dark prince will rule. The Cabal believes that the Traveler, or some agent of his, will bring this prince forth in this era and that it will rule under him.

The Cabal is made up of various cults, sects, and affiliations. Each sect has its own organizational details and character, but all follow the mystical force known as the Calling. This force binds the various sects of the Cabal together.

The few courageous scholars who have studied the phenomenon suspect that the Calling is a magical aspect of the Traveler that manifests in the dreams and unconscious minds of mortals. All Cabal members initially experience the Calling as a voice in their minds—an irresistible summons that draws them to Xen'drik.

JOINING THE CABAL OF SHADOWS

The various sects within the Cabal attract different types, but most commonly appeal to those willing to barter for arcane power or use it to manipulate



Cabal of Shadows
symbol

DE

others—including beguilers (PH2), duskblades (PH2), and warlocks (CAR). Still, anyone can potentially hear the Calling and be drawn to the shadows.

The Calling also appears to draw Cabalists to one another and to potential converts. New members in Stormreach are recruited right off the docks. A character who has experienced the Calling is likely to be approached by a small group within hours of arrival and taken directly before the Council of the Obscured.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Any non-good.

Special: Must take a loyalty oath before the Council of the Obscured.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Cabal of Shadows.

CRITERION	AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER
<i>One-Time</i>	
Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Evil alignment	+1
Patron deity the Traveler	+1
5 or more ranks in Bluff, Hide, or Move Silently	+2
Alternate form ability	+2
Established identity within an organization useful to the Cabal	+4
<i>Multiple Use</i>	
Fail a mission for your sect	-1
Defeat or significantly impede rival sect's operation	+2
Complete a mission on behalf of the Cabal	+2
Uncover information about the Caldyn Fragments	+2
Fail a mission for the Cabal	-2
Aid or show mercy to member of a rival sect	-4
Betray identity of another Cabalist	-4
Lose or surrender Cabal asset to rival sect	-4
Reveal your Cabal affiliation publicly	-4
Lose a power struggle within the Cabal	-1 to -4

PLAYING A SHADOW CABALIST

As long as you can remember, you have felt the Calling. In childhood it was only a whisper, there at the edge of dream or in times of peril. As the Calling grew stronger and clearer, you experienced vivid dreams of a faraway continent and of the buried power that sleeps there.

Eventually the Calling became irresistible, and you made your way to mysterious Xen'drik. You came to believe in the Calling as the true voice of the entity that some call the Traveler. But this power goes by many names, in many places, and its secrets are entwined in the arcane twistings of the draconic Prophecy. The Calling communicates its

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–5	Recruit: The Cabal of Shadows recognizes you, and you are granted potions or scrolls of up to 50 gp/character level in value.
6–15	Shade: Purchase 3rd-level or lower potions and scrolls for 75% of normal cost. +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Hide, Move Silently, and Sleight of Hand checks. <i>Obscuring mist</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. You are assigned to at least one mission per month.
16–23	Gloom: Purchase 3rd-level or lower potions and scrolls for 50% of normal cost. +4 bonus on Gather Information checks due to underworld network connections. <i>Darkness</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. You must command a small coven (2d4 1st-level NPCs) on at least one mission per month.
24–29	Shadow: <i>Meld into stone</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. <i>Trance of the Calling</i> —as divination, 1/week, as spell-like ability. You must organize 1d4 Cabalist missions per month and personally lead one per month.
30 or higher	Darkness: <i>Greater invisibility</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. You control your own sect. You are considered to have the Leadership feat with a base score of 15. You can launch major Cabal missions at your discretion.

will to you in dreams, or in the occasional trance-like states that overcome you in waking hours. You know now that the Calling can be heard most clearly, most powerfully, in the special rituals of the Cabal of Shadows.

At times you feel hesitant and wonder if you are following the proper path. But then you remember your enemies, the defeats and humiliations of your past, and you know you have found your home and your master. The power promised by the Calling transcends childish concepts such as good or evil. You have heard the Calling, you have been chosen, and you cannot resist the thrill of its dark power.

Combat

As a member of the Cabal of Shadows, you venerate the powers of concealment and obscurity—both in the pursuit of hidden knowledge and in the resolution of conflict. Your methods vary, but in any conflict you tend toward subterfuge and deception. Effective weapons include spells and items that rob your opponent of his senses, or distort them in some way advantageous to you and your allies. You always use

darkness and shadows when possible, along with illusions, invisibility, or simple physical cover.

Advancement and Missions

The quickest route to advancement within the Cabal is to complete missions for the leader of a sect, sometimes at the expense of other Cabal members. Such is the way of the Calling, that the foolish and weak should perish and the most skillful of deceivers should triumph. It is equally important to eliminate rivals—the holy fools of the Covenant, the thuggish sellswords of the Blackwheel Company, and the bookish children of the Crimson Codex. These impediments must be cleared so that the Cabal can achieve its ultimate goal: acquisition of the hidden mysteries of the Caldyn Fragments, and finally the power of the Prophecy itself.

THE CABAL OF SHADOWS IN STORMREACH

"Deceive me once, I shall learn; deceive me twice, one of us must die."
—Cabalist proverb

Sects within the Cabal of Shadows can be quite different indeed—a sect of chaotic neutral changelings can work together with a cult of lawful evil tieflings, or even form an uneasy alliance with a pack of mad daelkyr half-bloods. But the Calling unites them all in fear and dread and hope for glory.

For the most part the Cabal is scattered throughout Xen'drik, but as with any organization on the continent, the Cabal has interests in and around Stormreach.

As the name suggests, the Cabal of Shadows prefers to remain concealed in layers of darkness. Of all the societies in the city, the Cabal is the most underground, literally and otherwise. Cabalists move in the deepest catacombs and ruins beneath Stormreach, the darkest places where even the Bilge Rats fear to tread.

Very recently, rumors have swept through the city underworld that the Cabal and the Rats are working together to an unprecedented degree. Many suspect a practical alliance has been forged. Cabalists care little for the material trinkets the Rats covet, and the Rats in turn have little use for the mystical artifacts collected by their smugglers and fences.

Structure

Each Cabal sect—and there are at least a dozen active in Stormreach—has its own take on the Cabal's mission and how to achieve it. But four sects govern the overall direction of the Cabal through the Council of the Obscured, a ruling body in which the leaders of the four largest sects preside. These sects are the Mourners of Yore, the Defiance, the Instruments of Change, and the Children of Xoriat. The council, it is said, performs certain dark rituals below Stormreach and

elsewhere in Xen'drik to channel the true voice of the Calling and direct the actions of the Cabal as a whole. Without these regular rituals, it is likely that the sects would turn to savage infighting, collapsing the Cabal from within.

NPC Reactions

Anyone candidly identifying oneself as a member of the Cabal can expect open hostility in Stormreach. Among the general populace, the Cabal lies at the heart of dark tales told around the tavern hearth at midnight. Although some of these are merely folk tales and legends, a surprising number are accurate accounts of the Cabal's nefarious activities.

CABALIST: STEPPIN' JAQ

Many in Stormreach who speak of the entity known as Steppin' Jaq think, or hope, that he is simply an urban legend. The changeling Jaq heard the Calling at a very early age and left behind a life in Khorvaire that he can no longer remember. Now entirely devoted to the Calling and quite mad, Jaq walks the streets and alleys of Stormreach using his magic and shapechanging abilities to assume any of a dozen different identities. One minute he is a Stormreach Guard, the next a Bilge Rat enforcer. He even maintains separate identities among the sects, and it is likely that Jaq has no single controlling personality anymore. The persona known as Steppin' Jaq is the one that inspires the most fear. Hunting the alleys and shadows of the city at night, Jaq enjoys using *spider climb*, *invisibility*, and his rapier and shortbow to kill randomly for sport. Lost in the shadows of his own mind, Jaq could be anywhere, any time . . . or anyone.

STEPPIN' JAQ

CR 8

Male changeling beguiler^{PH2} 8

NE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Riedran, Elven, Dwarven, Giant

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 35 (8 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5; +2 against sleep and charm effects

Speed 30 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 keen rapier +7 (1d6/15–20) or

Ranged +1 shortbow +7 (1d6+1/×3)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Atk Options Point Blank Shot; Precise Shot; cloaked casting, surprise casting

Special Actions minor change shape

Combat Gear *slippers of spider climb*, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*

Beguiler Spells Known (CL 6th):

4th—*charm monster*, *confusion*, *crushing despair*, *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*, *greater mirror image*^{PH2}, *locate creature*, *mass whelm*^{PH2}, *phantom battle*^{PH2}, *rainbow pattern*, *solid fog*
3rd—*arcane sight*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *crown of veils*^{PH2}, *deep slumber*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *glibness*, *halt*^{PH2}, *haste*, *hesitate*^{PH2}, *hold person*, *inevitable defeat*^{PH2}, *invisibility sphere*,

legion of sentinels^{PH2}, major image, nondetection, slow, suggestion, vertigo field^{PH2}, zone of silence

2nd—blinding color surge^{PH2}, blur, daze monster, detect thoughts, fog cloud, glitterdust, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, knock, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, see invisibility, silence, spider climb, stay the hand^{PH2}, touch of idiocy, vertigo^{PH2}, whelming burst^{PH2}

1st—charm person, color spray, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, disguise self, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, mage armor, obscuring mist, rouse^{PH2}, silent image, sleep, undetectable alignment, whelm^{PH2}

0—dancing lights, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, message, open/close, read magic

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 8, Cha 14

SQ trapfinding, armored mage

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse, Silent Spell

Skills Appraise +12, Balance +5, Bluff, +11, Concentration +8, Disable Device +12, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (local) +12, Open Lock +12, Search +12, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +11

Possessions combat gear plus mithral shirt, +1 shortbow with 20 arrows, +1 rapier, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of mind shielding

Minor Change Shape (Su) As *disguise self* at will, but does not affect possessions.

Armored Mage (Ex) Jaq can cast spells in light armor.

Cloaked Casting (Ex) Jaq receives a +1 bonus on the save DC of any spell that targets any foe who would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not) and a +2 bonus on rolls made to overcome the spell resistance of any affected target.

Surprise Casting (Ex) As a move action, Jaq can use the Bluff skill to feint in combat. If successful, his target is denied its Dexterity bonus (if it has one) to AC for the next melee attack he makes against it or the next spell he casts. He must remain in melee with the target, and the attack must be made or the spell cast on or before his next turn. The target is not considered flat-footed and therefore can make attacks of opportunity against him if he does not cast defensively.

COVENANT OF LIGHT

"Lead by your example; inspire by your presence."

—Lady Lirashana, Founder of the Covenant

A compassionate and charismatic woman named Lirashana founded the Covenant of Light. Although she appears to be a kalashtar, the rumor persists that she is actually a divine spirit—a justice archon unable to ignore the pain and suffering she saw on Eberron. To the Covenant, the search to unlock the mysteries of the Caldyn Fragments is nothing less than a crusade for the powers of good.

It is said that when Lady Lirashana first endeavored to establish the Covenant, she was visited by overpowering celestial music, a force that she would later call the Song. The Song compelled her to create the Covenant in Xen'drik, and to include in its noble mission the pursuit of the draconic Prophecy. Followers of the Covenant also hear and follow the Song and believe that an era of enlightenment and peace can

THE CALDYN FRAGMENTS

Some call the ability to see the connections and collisions between all things "genius." Others call it "madness." I lean toward the former.

—Ohnal Caldyn

Four divergent power groups—the Blackwheel Company, the Cabal of Shadows, the Covenant of Light, and the Crimson Codex—are motivated by one event: the discovery, collection, and translation of various pieces of the draconic Prophecy into a single document by a Korranberg scholar named Ohnal Caldyn.

Even as a child, Ohnal could talk to a dragon-marked individual, or see a dragonshard, or study the skies, and he would make a prediction that at first seemed to go unfulfilled—only to be confirmed later in a different context. Taking to the life of an adventurer, Ohnal made it his mission to gather knowledge and insight into the draconic Prophecy. He began to understand that his ability to see the shifting patterns of reality tapped into a force that flowed through dragons, going back to the very first great dragons whose forms created the world.

The notes that Ohnal Caldyn recorded in his red-covered tome became known as the Caldyn Fragments. The most frequent mistake made by students of the Prophecy is to use "draconic Prophecy" and "Caldyn Fragments" interchangeably. They are not the same. The draconic Prophecy is an ever-changing and ephemeral force that, as far as anyone can tell, moves like a shadow behind reality, both reflecting and predicting the ebb and flow of all things living on, above, and beneath Eberron. The Caldyn Fragments are the result of Ohnal Caldyn's efforts to capture a small part of the Prophecy in a form that could be easily manipulated.

Caldyn founded the Crimson Codex to use his insights to promote peace and stability throughout Eberron. But as people outside the organization learned about the existence of the Caldyn Fragments, others scrambled to obtain copies of the work that could supposedly predict the future. Now, each of the four groups focused on the Caldyn Fragments tries to shape and manipulate the predictions to its own ends.

be brought forth by the collective power of virtue in action. Members are expected to behave in a virtuous manner in all aspects of their lives.

Mystics of many different religions have been drawn to the Covenant, and all have their own explanation for the Song. Worshipers of the Sovereign Host claim that it is the voice of Dol Arrah, calling the virtuous to battle. Followers of the Silver Flame attribute it to the Voice of the Flame. The kalashtar say that it is a manifestation of the noble impulses that exist within all mortal minds—the harbinger of il-Yannah, the glorious light of the next age. Regardless of its source, all Covenant members initially experience the Song directly as music in their minds—a bright and irresistible summons that draws them individually to serve in Xen'drik.

JOINING THE COVENANT OF LIGHT

Members of the Covenant of Light come from many different faiths, all devoted to a common cause—shaping the draconic Prophecy to serve the powers of good. The Song also reaches out to those who were not previously conspicuously pious. Many Covenant disciples previously lived lives of unattached wandering or base self-service. Anyone can potentially hear the Song and be drawn into the light. A character who followed the song to Stormreach is likely to be approached by the Covenant within hours of arrival.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Any non-evil.

Special: Must take an oath forswearing all evil in thought or deed.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Covenant of Light.

CRITERION	AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER
<i>One-Time</i>	
Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Good alignment	+1
Follower of Silver Flame or Path of Light	+1
Access to Good, Knowledge, or Sun domain	+2
Lawful good cleric, favored soul, or paladin	+4
<i>Multiple Use</i>	
Defeat or significantly impede rival faction	+2
Complete a mission on behalf of the Covenant	+2
Uncover information about the Caldyn Fragments	+2
Fail a mission for the Covenant	–2
Disobey order from a Covenant superior	–2
Fail to assist a Covenant member in need	–2
Accidentally kill an innocent or noncombatant	–2
Lose or surrender a Covenant asset to rival faction	–4
Any public act of cowardice or cruelty	–1 to –4

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–5	Recruit: The Covenant of Light recognizes you, and you are granted potions or scrolls of up to 50 gp/character level in value.
6–15	Stalwart: Free spellcasting services of 1st- and 2nd-level divine spells at Covenant locations in Xen'drik (material components must still be purchased). +2 circumstance bonus on Heal, Knowledge, and Sense Motive checks. <i>Protection from evil</i> 1/day as a spell-like ability. You are assigned to at least one mission per month.
16–23	Vanguard: Free spellcasting services of 3rd- and 4th-level divine spells at Covenant of Light locations in Xen'drik (material components must still be purchased). +4 bonus on Heal checks when in the company of other Covenant members. <i>Spiritual weapon</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. You must command a small assembly (2d4 1st-level NPCs) on at least one mission per month.
24–29	Singer: <i>Trance of the Calling</i> —as <i>divination</i> , 1/week, as spell-like ability. One free <i>raise dead</i> spell at a Covenant of Light location in Xen'drik (one time only). You must organize 1d4 Covenant missions per month and personally lead one per month.
30 or higher	Paragon: <i>Searing light</i> 1/day as spell-like ability. One free <i>resurrection</i> spell at a Covenant of Light location (one time only). You are considered to have the Leadership feat with a base score of 15. You can launch major Covenant missions at your discretion.

PLAYING A COVENANT DISCIPLE

All your life, you have felt your thoughts and actions to be guided by certain mystic rhythms. Later you would come to recognize this as the Song, the celestial music that rings in the heart of every Covenant disciple. The Song was often accompanied by visions of a faraway continent, and you associated feelings of elation and strength with the benevolent energy there.

Eventually the Song became impossible to resist, and you journeyed to distant Xen'drik. You came to recognize the Song as the true voice of a force that goes by many names. Dol Arrah, some might say, or il-Yannah. Some disciples prefer to employ no name at all, but they know the Song as well as you. It is the power of life and light, energy and transformation. You have come to believe that its potential energy can be made actual by shaping of certain aspects of the draconic Prophecy.

The Song always guides you in deed and thought. At times its power is almost overwhelming, and you can fall into trancelike states for hours. But the Song is most beautiful when sung with the collective voice and prayer of your companions in the Covenant.

Under the leadership of Lady Lirashana, the Covenant and its members have chosen to focus their efforts on a single goal while operating in Xen'drik: shaping the evolution of the draconic Prophecy, particularly those aspects relating to the Caldyn Fragments. In Stormreach, this single-mindedness often means turning a deaf ear to the cries of the needy and oppressed all around you. You might at times feel conflicted about this requirement—and in fact it is a point of contention among many in the Covenant—but you must obey the dictates of the Covenant and conserve your energy for the larger task at hand.

Combat

Many sorry foes have underestimated the righteous might of the Covenant. Like your brothers and sisters, you uphold the ideals of honorable combat, self-sacrifice, valor, and courage. Neither stealth nor vicious savagery can truly threaten the warrior of the Covenant, for you serve a higher purpose, and a singularly potent force guides your sword. You know in your heart where true power lies. You hear the Song, and thus need not fear. And the fearless warrior is the mightiest of all.

Advancement and Missions

The quickest route to advancement is to complete missions for the Covenant, always with the greater good in mind and never at the expense of others of charitable will. Such is the way of the Song, that the righteous and brave should triumph and in unity achieve the ultimate goal. To this end, the forces of darkness must be staunchly opposed—especially those who would violate the Prophecy, twisting it to wicked or irrelevant purposes. This opposition particularly includes the vile mockery that is the Cabal of Shadows, and also the misguided mercenaries of the Blackwheel Company and the amoral academics of the Crimson Codex.

THE COVENANT OF LIGHT IN STORMREACH

"Girded are we in Light and Song, but when to Shine, and where to Sing?"
—Covenant of Light, Psalm XVII

The Covenant of Light encompasses many distinct flames, from Adaran seers and paladins of Thrane to Sovereign priests and ascetics of a dozen different holy monastic orders. The Song has called out to more unlikely places as well, drawing shifter shamans from Sarlona's Tashana Tundra, utopian cultists from the marshes of Q'barra, and even repentant rogues from the gutters of Stormreach.

As with the other factions that pursue the secrets of the Caldyn Fragments in Xen'drik, the Covenant of Light is principally interested in Stormreach as a way station, a stable port from which to mount expeditions to the interior. The leadership of the Covenant also recognizes that Stormreach is the likely port of call for new aspirants following the summons of the Song. As such, the Covenant keeps a standing force in the city, based out of several small temples located throughout various districts.

Lady Lirashana mandates that the disciples of the Covenant are not to become involved in local affairs on any level. Stormreach is a dangerous, lawless place, and the Covenant is not trying to clean it up. Disciples are in Xen'drik on a far greater mission—shaping the draconic Prophecy to their own ends. Still, members might stray from the leadership's dictates out of simple compassion, bringing the Covenant reluctantly into play.



**Covenant of Light
symbol**

DE

Structure

The Covenant of Light is divided into three branches.

The Scions are the standard adventurers and agents of the Covenant of Light; most adventurers will be Scions in the organization.

The Radiance is a leadership level in the Covenant; all members of the Radiance are of celestial blood or are sponsored into the branch by a patron celestial.

The Nightstars is a very small branch, unknown to most members of the Covenant of Light. It counts rogues, bards, and other stealthy agents among its number and performs services for the organization that serve the cause of good but must be achieved through methods that are less than honorable.

NPC Reactions

To most in Stormreach, the Covenant is just another expeditionary outfit using the city as a base of operations. The adventuring Scions are not unlike any other group, if perhaps a bit more aloof and high-minded.

Those affiliated with the Blackwheel Company or the Crimson Codex view Covenant disciples as competitors at best—or perhaps blood enemies, depending on recent developments “in the field.” Those who associate with the Cabal of Shadows target Covenant disciples for later engagement, when the sun goes down.

GILEAD'S FLOCK

Among the residual force the Covenant maintains in the city of Stormreach is a small group of clerics and warriors known as Gilead's Flock. Led by Gilead Rhoy (LG male human aristocrat 5/cleric 3), a former Brelish noble, this group is tasked with locating and sheltering potential Covenant recruits when they arrive in Stormreach.

Gilead is a highly charismatic man with an aura of genuine peace and serenity about him. He has proven to have an uncanny ear for hearing the Song within others and guiding them to their proper role within the Covenant. When Gilead first arrived in Stormreach, he was abducted by the Cabal of Shadows and held prisoner for several days before the Covenant rescued him from a chamber deep beneath the city. No one knows the full story of what happened to Gilead at that time, but he lost the use of his legs permanently—no healing magic has been able to mend him. Gilead now makes his way around the city on a small (5-foot-by-5-foot) *carpet of flying*—a gift from an anonymous benefactor. This experience inspired Gilead to actively seek out and protect new disciples for the Covenant.

Gilead is accompanied at all times by his two most trusted companions and friends. Boorne (NG male personality warforged ranger 6) is a “scout model” created toward the end of the Last War, and one of the few warforged to have followed the Song to Xen'drik. Leahtari (LG female kalashtar psion 7) was one of the first wave of kalashtar pilgrims to find their way to

the Covenant of Light in Xen'drik. She is an unusually gifted precognitive, and she uses her clairsentient abilities to assist Gilead in locating new disciples.

CRIMSON CODEX

“For every riddle there is an answer. For every answer, another riddle.”

—Ingrim Jarell, Prophet of the Crimson Codex

The secret society known as the Crimson Codex has a twofold purpose—to study and manipulate the draconic Prophecy. The organization's ultimate goal is to avoid another confrontation on the scale of the Last War, reunite Galifar, and return to a golden age of peace and enlightenment. The Codex believes that knowledge is by far the most powerful weapon, and that the Prophecy is the ultimate knowledge.

To that end, the Crimson Codex has a network of spies and informants within all major civilized governments of Khorvaire. This network ensures that treaties are upheld and peace remains a priority. Of the four factions pursuing the Caldyn Fragments, the Codex has the strongest connection to the dragons and their kin. Like the great wyrms, the Codex is capable of waiting many years for plans to come to fruition.

DE Although the Codex is a global operation with interests in each of Eberron's continents, it continues to focus considerable resources in Xen'drik in pursuit of the ultimate prize: the potent knowledge contained in the Caldyn Fragments (see page 105).

JOINING THE CRIMSON CODEX

The Crimson Codex prefers to recruit those who effectively wield knowledge as power—particularly wizards, factotums (*Dun*), and archivists (*HH*). The Codex eagerly recruits members of the dragon prophet



Crimson Codex symbol

MIRROR IMAGES

Higher-ups in the Cabal of Shadows and the Covenant of Light are quite aware that the Calling and the Song seem to be virtually identical phenomena. Naturally, this fact disturbs both groups. Their leaders explain away such concerns by saying that their opposite number is a twisted, invalid reflection of the

true voice that only they hear clearly. But secretly they wonder why such a parallel exists, and if—unthinkable as it would be—they really are the same in the end. And if that were true, what does the Singer (or the Caller) want from them all?

prestige class (*ME*). But any who believe in the final cause of the Codex are welcome, and all classes are represented in the organization.

The Codex does not publicly recruit new members in the manner of the Blackwheel Company. Instead, Codex operatives at every level of society constantly scout for new blood and like-minded souls. New members are never coerced into joining—endlessly patient, Codex recruiters know that the truth of their cause will ultimately persuade all who are meant to enter the Codex.

The Codex is an elite secret society, with political, financial, and magical resources throughout Eberron.

Entry Requirements

Skill: At least 3 ranks in any Knowledge skill

Special: Applicants must renounce all previous affiliations and swear lifelong allegiance to the Codex.

Taking the name Crimson Codex after the tome compiled by Ohnal Caldyn, this group pledged to use the Prophecy, as well as the secrets locked away in the continent of Xen'drik and elsewhere, to reestablish control over the events of Khorvaire and increase its members' power throughout Eberron. In this way, the ultimate goal of the Codex is lasting peace and a unified kingdom in Khorvaire through the study and manipulation of the draconic Prophecy. However, whenever there is great power such as that held in the Prophecy, there are people who would seek that power for their own ends.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Crimson Codex.

CRITERION	AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER
<i>One-Time</i>	
Any Knowledge skill	+1 per 5 ranks
Multilingual	+1 per 3 languages spoken
Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Can speak Draconic	+1
Bears dragonmark of any kind	+4
Dragon type or dragonblood subtype	+4
<i>Multiple Use</i>	
Complete a mission on behalf of the Crimson Codex	+2
Uncover information about the Caldyn Fragments	+2
Defeat or significantly impede rival faction	+2
Misinterpret a piece of the draconic Prophecy	-1
Publicly associate with rival faction member	-2
Needlessly kill an enemy who might have information	-2
Betray identity of another Codex operative	-4
Lose or surrender Codex asset to rival faction	-4
Reveal your Codex affiliation publicly	-4

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–5	Recruit: The Codex recognizes you, and you are granted a 50 gp/character level research retainer.
6–15	Sage: 50 gp/month income. If you have access to Codex libraries, research grants a +2 bonus on Knowledge checks. <i>Comprehend languages</i> 1/week as spell-like ability. You are assigned to at least one mission per month.
16–23	Augurer: 100 gp/month income, plus one-time selection of scrolls of up to 10,000 gp in value from library. +4 bonus on Gather Information checks made in Stormreach due to Codex connections. You must command a small cell (2d4 1st-level NPCs) on at least one mission per month.
24–29	Seer: 200 gp/month, plus selection of one magic item of up to 30,000 gp in value. You must organize 1d4 Codex missions per month and personally lead one per month.
30 or higher	Prophet: 400 gp/month; +2 caster level to all divination spells. You are considered to have the Leadership feat with a base score of 15. You can launch major Codex missions at your discretion.

PLAYING A CODEX OPERATIVE

The Last War left Eberron on the brink of collapse. You know that the tenuous treaties of Thronehold must not only be maintained, they must be built upon and expanded so that the traditions of Galifar can be restored. Only with sustained peace can the pursuit of knowledge be furthered. You adventure not for fortune and glory, but for the very soul of Eberron.

You and your comrades in the Codex have determined, without a doubt, the source of ultimate knowledge. You know that the Prophecy is the ultimate and abiding reality. If this is the sole mystery that has occupied the great wyrms for time uncounted, what could be more important? It is the Great Game, the essential riddle of the times.

Many groups and factions vie for power in Eberron—churches and nations, houses and guilds, monsters and madmen. But only the Crimson Codex has the knowledge and the will to piece together the final puzzle. Wisdom is foresight. Knowledge is power.

Combat

The learned combatant is the victorious combatant. You are a master of fighting intelligently, employing strategies and tactics drawn from a dozen disciplines.

Know thine enemy: This is your guiding principle in all conflict, whether martial, political, or otherwise. More often than not, this means the judicious application of magical means. Divination magic in particular is vital to the mission of the Crimson Codex.

Use your advanced knowledge to leverage environments and terrains to your advantage. Employ your learning to ferret out weakness in your enemy and exploit it. Always remember to call upon the vast resources of information within the Codex.

Advancement and Missions

Within the Crimson Codex, accumulation of knowledge is paramount. Advancement within the organization depends on the knowledge you possess and your skill in wielding it effectively. The most valued Codex members are those who can recover and interpret portions of the Prophecy, particularly as they relate to the Caldyn Fragments.

But you are no cloistered scholar, bent over crumbling scrolls by candlelight. You work in the field, fighting for every advantage against the rival factions that would subvert the true Prophecy.

Because of the nature of the Prophecy, the Crimson Codex has no enduring enemies. The Prophecy might bring you into conflict with a group one day, yet make its members your allies the next. Seeking ultimate knowledge is a game within a game, a riddle with no known parameters.

Adventures combining puzzles, exploration, and subterfuge allow Crimson Codex members to use their knowledge and combat skills in conjunction with interpreting bits of the draconic Prophecy. The Codex is also the organization most likely to send agents on distant quests—perhaps even to Sarlona or Argonnessen.

THE CRIMSON CODEX IN STORMREACH

"The Crimson Codex? It's a fairy tale. No outfit can be that many places at once. Believe me, I've been around a long time."

—The late Thaddius Archer, Deneith sellsword

Of all the clandestine organizations that operate in Xen'drik, the Codex is the most established, with many long-term strategies in play. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, the Codex is all but invisible to the uninitiated observer. Members of the Codex prefer to hide in plain sight, their affiliation a carefully guarded secret. Anyone could potentially be affiliated with the Crimson Codex, and the strength of the organization, in many ways, is that no one knows for sure.

This does not mean, however, that the Codex simply lurks in the shadows. After all, the Codex competes directly with the Blackwheel Company, the Cabal of Shadows, and the Covenant of Light in pursuit of the Caldyn Fragments. The organization mounts

expeditions to the interior of Xen'drik constantly, but perhaps more discreetly than its competitors. Highly decentralized, the Codex can divert resources with astonishing speed and precision, initiating lightning-quick strikes and disappearing again almost instantly.

Allies and enemies shift with every turning of the Prophecy, but the Crimson Codex works closely with certain members of the Chamber, the draconic organization working to bring the Prophecy to fruition. Other members of the Chamber, however, do not feel that humanoids are worthy or capable of the task and seek to thwart the Crimson Codex.

Like the dragons, the Codex seldom involves itself in mundane affairs. When the Codex does become active in Stormreach matters, its methods are exceedingly subtle. At home with ambiguity and contradiction, the Codex, in any given conflict, could potentially be allied with either side. Or both.

Structure

The Crimson Codex is divided into four branches, with members maintaining their ranks within their branch.

The Tomes are students and interpreters of the draconic Prophecy.

The Specters are spies and treasure hunters.

The Hammers are guards and enforcers.

The Serpents are elite forces, sent into the field to do the most dangerous work. Serpents are chosen from the most promising Tomes, Specters, and Hammers.

All ranks and affiliations are closely guarded secrets, and no one within the Codex ever publicly reveals his or her station to strangers.

NPC Reactions

For most people of Stormreach, the Crimson Codex is little more than a myth. Of course, this is just how the Codex wants it—the group has done a remarkable job of convincing much of the world that it doesn't actually exist. Members of the other factions pursuing the Caldyn Fragments have a healthy respect for the Crimson Codex.

Professor Jarell

Formerly of the Library of Korranberg in Zilargo, Professor Ingram Jod Jarell (LN female gnome expert 7/wizard 4) is a thin, bespectacled figure with rather severe facial features (and a temperament to match). A dedicated leader within the Crimson Codex, she served for many years as one of Khorvaire's leading scholars on the history of magic in Xen'drik and Sarlona.

Her identity as an operative of the Codex was compromised, however, when she risked an unwise collaboration with the Lords of Dust to secure a schema in the heart of the Mournland. Summarily dismissed from the Library and pursued by several

wronged parties, Jarell fled to Stormreach where she was taken in and sheltered by her true colleagues.

Jarell now remains almost entirely underground, literally and figuratively, protected by the Codex's intricate network of influence in Stormreach. She is still a formidable scholar, and virtually every artifact the Codex acquires in Xen'drik crosses her desk at some point. Her knowledge of ancient magic is vast, and anyone looking to obtain particularly obscure information would do well to consult her.

GUARDIANS OF RUSHEMÉ

"You set your doom in motion. We will mark your passing, and hold it to this one place."

—Gaulronak, rushem'dal of Stormreach

When the pirate lords established their outpost in Stormreach, an old hill giant came to them. She called herself Rushemé, and she warned them of an ancient curse upon the land. When the captains dismissed her tales, the crone departed peacefully and never approached the pirates again. A group of giants was camped nearby, and the trade goods they offered were a boon to the human settlers. This tent city remained as the new Stormreach took shape, and it came to be known as the Tents of Rushemé. The giants of this place are peaceful folk, and the majority of them are hill giants; the lords of Stormreach doubt that these dim-witted creatures could be hiding any great secrets.

They are mistaken.

Rushemé was not the name of a woman. It is a concept: the peaceful spirit of the land, the resting soul of Xen'drik. The wandering nomads who carry the name seek to live in harmony with the land and to avoid the horrors unleashed in the past. For most, this is a matter of holding to the simple nomadic lifestyle. But a few take on greater duties. They are shamans and storytellers, who tend to restless spirits and record the rise and fall of the unwise. And a few among them are champions who ensure that when doom rises once more, it is confined to those who set it in motion. These are the Guardians of Rushemé.

Most of the Guardians of Rushemé are giants, but a few among the little people have been brought onto the path. For all their strength, the giants are a simple folk and rarely reach the heights of skill that a player character can attain. The elder known as Gaulronak has a keen eye for the potential that lies within the smaller races. When he sees someone who is truly worthy, Gaulronak shows her the way to Rushemé.

JOINING THE GUARDIANS

Those who have a bond to the natural world or to the realm of spirits are most welcome among the Guardians of Rushemé. Druids, rangers, and spirit shamans (CD) are all respected for their gifts. Preservation

of knowledge and the telling of tales are equally important, and bards have a role to play in the order. Wizards and artificers are rarely accepted, since dabbling into the arcane has brought great tragedy to Xen'drik.

Entry Requirements

Special: Must find a path to the spirits of the land.

Although anyone can seek membership in the Guardians of Rushemé, not even a rushem'dal can grant this status. The initiate must find a connection with Rushemé itself by way of an adventure that leads the character into the wilds of Xen'drik. A seeker could be tasked to overcome a lingering fiend from the Age of Demons, to speak with the roc Kraa'ark Lors (page 128) and obtain his blessing, to earn the trust of one of the oldest drow priests of Vulkoor, or to face any challenge the DM deems appropriate. A rushem'dal can set an adventurer on this path; however, the attempt is doomed to fail unless the character has an affiliation score of at least 0 when all one-time modifiers are applied.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to Guardians of Rushemé. A Guardian of Rushemé forms a spiritual bond with the land. As a Guardian rises in rank, this connection grants a range of abilities. If the Guardian travels to another hand, he loses all benefits until he returns.

CRITERION AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER

One-Time

Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Knowledge (history) 5 or more ranks	+1
Knowledge (nature) 5 or more ranks	+1
Knowledge (the planes) 5 or more ranks	+1
Perform (oratory) 5 or more ranks	+1
At least one level of ranger or bard	+1
Affiliated with the Gatekeepers	+2
Risked life opposing the enemies of Rushemé	+2
At least one level of druid or spirit shaman ^{CD}	+3
Unnecessarily aggressive	-3
Greedy	-3
At least one level of wizard or artificer	-6
Race other than giant	-10

Multiple Use

Defeat the enemies of Rushemé	+1
Accomplish noncombat objective	+1
Gain information about unknown threat	+1
Serve as vessel for a spirit of the land	+1
Major victory	+4
Fight to indulge aggression	-1
Fail to achieve mission objective	-2
Failure empowers an existing enemy	-4
Failure results in release of a new enemy	-8

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

3 or lower	None.
4–10	Rushugan: +3 bonus on Survival checks made in Xen'drik. You must aid the rushem'dal in any way possible. Any Guardian of rushugan rank or above can sense your rank and know you as a fellow Guardian.
11–15	Ordinas: +2 bonus on Listen and Spot checks made in Xen'drik. Gain access to storytelling instructors; Knowledge (history) and Perform (oratory) become class skills.
16–22	Kelshoc: 1/day, gain a bonus equal to +1 per three levels on one saving throw or skill check when in Xen'drik. You must declare the use of this bonus before making the roll.
23 or higher	Rushem'dal: 1/day, use <i>sending</i> or <i>transport via plants</i> as a spell-like ability (caster level equals your character level) when in Xen'drik.

The giants of Rushemé have little to offer in the way of material aid. Few powerful spellcasters dwell among them, but a Rushemé druid will certainly heal a champion injured in the line of duty. The main thing your comrades have to offer you is their stories. As a Guardian of Rushemé, heed the advice of Gaulronak and the other rushem'dal. The tales of Rushemé chronicle the terrors of the past and hold answers to the riddles of Xen'drik for those with the wisdom to see.

PLAYING A GUARDIAN

For a Guardian of Rushemé, it is important to understand the concept of Rushemé itself. The rushem'dal say that the land has a soul, and that all lesser creatures are manifestations of that greater spirit. When mortals die, they return to the land to be reborn. Some concepts are strong enough to exist as independent spirits; in the eyes of Rushemé, the drow deity Vulkoor is simply one of these lesser spirits, the essence of the Scorpion. As a Guardian, you must come to recognize and respect these powers, from the land itself to the minor spirits that guide your comrades.

But darkness covers the land. The soul of Xen'drik is riddled with cancers, horrors produced by epic magic and the wars of the elder giants. These ancient curses and twisted spirits cannot be destroyed, and it's not always possible to prevent the foolish from unleashing this darkness. In such cases, all that can be done is to record their folly and ensure that a small disaster does not spread into a greater cataclysm. So it is with Stormreach. The rushem'dal know that it is only a matter of time before the city falls. You might disagree, and the elders will not fault you for trying

to save your people; perhaps you will postpone their doom for a few more decades. But ultimately your duty lies beyond Stormreach, ensuring that when it is destroyed, the terrors unleashed do not spread to the world outside.

In choosing this path, you have become a bridge between two worlds. You are an adventurer from a civilized nation, a force that seeks to expand and explore. But you are also a guardian of ancient traditions, aware of the fact that there are things best left unknown and that progress isn't always for the best.

If you are a humanoid in a society of giants, you might feel like an interloper. However, the other Guardians look to your spirit, not your body, and they consider you a younger brother. As a young Guardian, it is your duty to learn as much about the land as possible. You must find out which spirits can be placated and which must be opposed, memorize the tales of the past, and come to terms with the many threats of the shattered land. If you are good, you approach your duties with compassion, seeking to protect the innocent for as long as you can. If you are evil, you might be more pragmatic; in maintaining the peace, you protect yourself.

Combat

The Guardians of Rushemé seek to avoid unnecessary violence. They win their battles through observance of rituals and preservation of knowledge. If you are a nongiant, you take a more active role—fighting fiends instead of limiting the damage that they cause. What is most important is to use knowledge as a weapon rather than relying on brute force. Understand what you face. Learn what has defeated it in the past. Act with wisdom instead of anger, and you are following the path of Rushemé.

Advancement

Advancement within the Guardians of Rushemé is a question of spiritual evolution. You rise by carrying out missions for the rushem'dal, but the elders do not promote you; rather, as you serve the cause, your bond to the land grows stronger until you attain the next rank on your own.

Missions

The Guardians of Rushemé watch troubled areas, recording the fate of those who are drawn to the darkness and refuse to see the risks. They perform rituals that they believe hold these forces at bay, limiting the impact of the Du'rashka Tul (SX 53) and similar disasters. These might just be superstitions, but the Guardians believe that these patient measures, gathering knowledge and following tradition, are vital to the protection of the world. A ritual mission might involve transporting a stone idol a thousand miles, following as precise a path as is possible considering the Traveler's Curse (SX 25). Although the act might

seem meaningless, the elders believe that it reinforces the lifeline of Xen'drik itself.

Sometimes, however, more direct action is required. In the recent past, the Guardians gathered en masse to oppose the Battalion of the Basalt Towers (page 125). But the giants of Rushemé are peaceful folk, ill prepared for such battles. This is where you come in. You are a child of a violent and chaotic world, a world of metal and magic. Your people have upset the balance of things, and that makes it your role to set things right. You might have to face the binders of the Basalt Towers or other natives of Xen'drik. But you are more likely to deal with the actions of foreigners—dwarves who have dug too deep, humans who have pressed too far, even yuan-ti or dragons who have come from afar and upset the balance. In the eyes of the elders, this is what has brought you to Xen'drik. You are the agent of balance, the force that will undo the damage caused by others of your kind.

On rare occasions spirits of the land, beings that advise and empower through divine channeling, choose to speak to a Guardian of Rushemé. This is a great honor, and the manifestation of such a spirit is typically the beginning of a long and dangerous struggle.

GUARDIANS OF RUSHEMÉ IN STORMREACH

"So these snakes are almost upon us when this brown giant with green hair bursts out of the trees, moving faster than you can imagine. There's a halfling in a basket around her neck, and he's singing. Fight's over before I can blink. The yuan-ti are dead, the giant's gone, and there's not even a trace of her passage."

—Durl'Aashta, Tharashk prospector

The Guardians of Rushemé are a source of warnings and information. They will not save Stormreach, but they might reveal information the humans need to save themselves (or at least survive for a few more years). The organization as a whole is a passive force, but individual champions—whether human or giant—might step in to assist adventurers. And extraordinary events such as the Basalt Towers' attack on Stormreach could drive Rushemé to action, placing an army of giants alongside the adventurers.

Although similarities abound between the Guardians of Rushemé and the Gatekeepers or the Ashbound druids, they are not the same. The Guardians know that arcane magic is a path to destruction, but they believe a wizard has a right to walk that path; a Guardian



Adventurers of any race can hear the call of the Guardians

will simply record his downfall and seek to limit the harm he causes to the truly innocent. Beyond this, although the Guardians make use of natural magic, they revere the power of Rushemé—the spirits of Xen'drik. The true nature of this force is a mystery. Clearly some force empowers the Guardians and can even engage in divine channeling. Perhaps it is the continental soul the giants believe it to be. Or perhaps Rushemé is the spiritual host of the titans, ancient and mighty beings who bound their souls to Eberron in their quest to escape death. Perhaps it is a force from Lammania, or a lord of Thelanis toying with mortals. The true nature and motive of Rushemé can have a tremendous impact on the role of the Guardians in a game.

Many among the rushem'dal blame the dragons for the downfall of Xen'drik and the original blow to the soul of the land. They say that the gift of magic was a hostile act—that the dragons knew what would happen, and gave the giants the tools required to destroy themselves. The elders also oppose those foolish enough to seek to regain this power, including the Scriveners of the Sky, the Dominion of Purity, and the Battalion of the Basalt Tower. The inhabitants of the Tents of Rushemé are largely a passive force, but explorers in the depths of Xen'drik could easily encounter a team of jungle giant (SX) rangers determined to prevent them from crossing an ancient line.

Only a few Guardians live among the Tents of Rushemé. The rushem'dal of Stormreach is a venerable giant named Gaulronak (N male hill giant druid 6). Although the giants know of the important role that he plays and respect his wisdom, Gaulronak rarely reveals his influence. He sells fruits and rare herbs at a tent near the city gate, sharing stories with anyone who will listen. He has lived in the region for almost two hundred years, and he possesses remarkable intelligence and charisma for a hill giant; he has befriended the merchants and citizens of the city and served as a liaison between the Tents of Rushemé and the Storm Lords on numerous occasions. Now and again, he repeats the warning that his grandmother brought to Stormreach, cautioning the Storm Lords that they could still escape their doom, but his words are always dismissed.

Gaulronak is the watcher of Stormreach, but a second rushem'dal occasionally comes to the city. Kularket (N female jungle giant^{SX} spirit shaman^{CD} 9) is one of the strongest spellcasters among the Guardians. Her tribe lives in the heart of the deepest jungles, but she occasionally uses *transport via plants* to visit Gaulronak and study the cursed city. During the Fire Storm, Kularket led the forces of Rushemé in their stand against the Basalt Towers. Kularket prefers to avoid dealing with the little people, but she might assist adventurers who have become champions of Rushemé.

Structure

The Guardians of Rushemé follow a simple hierarchy. Members are expected to heed the wisdom of those of higher rank, but they are never required to obey them. Rank is a matter of spiritual advancement, and personal politics don't enter into it. Most Guardians are hill giants, stone giants, and jungle giants (SX 77).

In addition to guiding the Guardians, the rushem'dal serve as community leaders for the giants around them. They are expected to provide guidance and to help their people live in harmony with the land. Lower-ranking members gather knowledge and perform the rituals that preserve the spiritual balance.

The role of champion is one that stands outside of rank. Those chosen for active duty can be rushugan or rushem'dal; it is the spirits that call a hero to battle, and it is not for the elders to decide if the call is justified.

NPC Reactions

Few people outside the tribes of Rushemé have any real understanding of the Guardians and their duties. As a result, most people are indifferent toward agents of Rushemé. Within tribal communities, a known Guardian of Rushemé will receive a friendly reaction. Since the Guardians can recognize one another, they are helpful to others of the order.

HOLLOW SHARDS

"Darion! Look what I just picked up down in Cross! Watch this. You might want step back a bit . . . Ready? Thundrak! . . . huh? . . . THUNDRAK! I don't get it, this stupid wand worked perfectly when the merchant showed it to me."

—Delgard ir'Dashan, sucker

Not everything is what it seems in Stormreach, and that speaks to how the Hollow Shards make their living. Illusionists, crackpot artificers, confidence artists, and base rogues to the last, the Shards offer customers a wide variety of goods, from "official" Sivils documents, to "ancient" relics of the titan kings. The only catch: Not one bit of it is authentic.

The premier tricksters in a city where everyone is running a scam, the Hollow Shards are unparalleled masters of deceit. The most successful of the Shards are the forgers, crafters so skilled that their handiwork is often more impressive to behold than authentic relics, artwork, or magic items. The Shards churn out old frayed-edged pirate treasure maps, realistically water-damaged and decaying journals of famous long-dead explorers (in their exact handwriting) that describe the secrets they used to find and plumb the depths of distant ruined vaults, and even stone tablets in old Giant telling wild (and fallacious) tales of the ancient titan kingdoms.

BECOMING A HOLLOW SHARD

Experts, bards, rogues, illusionists, and clerics of Olladra or the Traveler (or any other faith that espouses the Trickery domain) are drawn to the ranks of the Hollow Shards. Joining the Shards is easy enough, since membership grants petitioners very little until they prove their dedication to the undermining of all things and the deception of others not only for profit, but also on principle.

Entry Requirements

Skill: Bluff 3 ranks or Forgery 3 ranks.

Special: To become a Hollow Shard, you must give a donation of at least 1,000 gp to the organization.

To join the Shards is to draw back the veil on the relic trade in the city, and new members are dumbfounded to learn just how significant a portion of the items sold in the Marketplace are nothing more than worthless knock-offs. Older members love to regale novices with lists of their classic work on display in magically warded exhibits in Morgrave University as priceless relics and landmark discoveries "intrinsic to weaving the complex tapestry of Xen'drik's long history."

Herein lies the key to the Shards' tremendous power. It is one thing to sell a fake wand to a fool of a wizard, but to create history itself and hoodwink an entire continent of scholars and researchers into buying your own personal version of the past's most important moments . . . that is power beyond that of

any dragon or rakshasa. The Shards erase gods and raise meager civilizations from obscurity to be memorialized as gloried kingdoms of a continent's golden era . . . and this prodigious power is wielded by a ragtag collective of forgers, con artists, and thieves.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Hollow Shards.

CRITERION	AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER
<i>One-Time</i>	
Character level	+1 per 2 levels
Craft (any) 5 or more ranks	+1
Ability to cast a 3rd-level spell of the illusion school	+1
Initial donation is a fake that fools at least one member	+2
<i>Multiple Use</i>	
Sell a fake item for over 5,000 gp	+1
Concoct elaborate lie to exonerate a fellow Shard	+1
Get your work displayed in a reputable museum	+2
Patronized by a dragonmarked house	+2
Get caught selling forgeries	-1
Earn money through legitimate means	-1
Resort to violence before attempting deception	-2
Get suckered by a non-Shard con artist	-4
Tell the whole truth about a Shard scam to anyone	-8

TWENTY SHARDS OF WISDOM

1. Deception isn't wrong, getting caught is.
2. The boy who cried worg? Love that story. Wonderful moral: Don't ever tell the same the lie twice.
3. A lie is a lie only if you can't think of a better lie to explain it.
4. Tell a little truth when you lie. It backs up the deceptions with concrete, provable facts, and that earns you a man's trust. Once you have a man's trust, his purse isn't far behind.
5. Lie little, lie vague. Weave too big a web of deceit and it becomes easy to poke holes in it. The more details you offer the easier it is to find one that doesn't fit. A few good casual details go a lot farther than a wildly conjectured epic.
6. Don't lie, imply. Suggest an untruth and let others come to its conclusion on their own. That way if it comes out as hogwash, in all honesty you can say: "I never said that—you did!"
7. They're all white lies.
8. Truth is for philosophers, the rest of us deal in interpretation.
9. What you don't know can't hurt you.

10. What they don't know can't hurt them.
11. What they don't know they can't hurt you for.
12. The truth hurts . . . most likely you . . . so don't tell it.
13. Remember, juggling lies is like juggling knives . . . it's not entirely safe, so you might not want to juggle too many at once.
14. Power perceived is power achieved.
15. If you get caught lying, pretend you're crazy. Then people just feel sorry for you.
16. Every now and then, admit that you lied about something inconsequential. Apologize profusely and swear ardently, "But I would never lie about anything important, of course." Suckers eat this up like kids eat candy.
17. There is no seventeen.
18. Believe your own lies. If you do, everyone else will too.
19. Truth is overrated, lies are much more fun.
20. Everyone lies, we're just better at it. Here endeth the lesson.
21. Every one of these is a lie.

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–3	Petitioner with no benefits.
4–10	Con Artist: +2 competence bonus on Bluff checks. Must hoodwink at least two marks a week and amass 100 gp profit turned over to higher-ranking members of the Shards; this money cannot be earned through any legitimate means.
11–15	Trickster: +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand and Forgery checks. Those attempting to use Sense Motive untrained to defeat your Bluff checks automatically fail. You must lie to a person in power at least once a month, and this lie must be dangerous to you if the truth is ever exposed.
16–22	Honest Shard: +2 bonus on Disguise checks. You cultivate a fake reputation as an honorable merchant, artisan, or any other trade you choose. Those making Gather Information or Knowledge (local) checks turn up whatever information you planted about your past and present activities.
23 or higher	Charlatan: Make a Bluff check in place of any Decipher Script, Heal, Gather Information, Knowledge, Profession, or Survival check. Your expertise on any topic seems so thorough that those actually versed in the subject might doubt themselves. The result of your Bluff check is the DC of a Sense Motive or any relevant skill check of anyone who wishes to question your expertise. Failure indicates the person believes your words over his or her own actual expertise.

PLAYING A HOLLOW SHARD

Lies are your living, and you live for a good scam. Don't ever tell the whole truth, it's sacrilege. Chicanery and legerdemain are constants in your life. Lying is like any other skill, so if you don't practice all the time, you get rusty.

Combat

Violence is failure. If you can't talk your way out of a situation with your silver tongue, then you are losing your touch. Likewise, if you need someone eliminated, you can always talk a third party into it. Frame enemies for crimes, convince others that your foes are acting against them (even if they are not), or repeat a few choice insults they uttered about someone's mother in your presence (even if they didn't say a word). Then sit back and watch the bedlam unfold.

If forced into a fight, make sure you are on the winning side. The real battle takes place before swords are drawn, when you convince all conflicting parties that you are really one of them. If cornered, defend yourself with deception and trickery. Feint with word and deed, tricking opponents into believing you are going to do one thing and then surprise them with another attack. Distract, dazzle, or confuse them through magical or mundane means. A noxious smokestick proves a valuable ally in a pinch, as does a quick spell to blind a foe. Concealed weapons give you an edge. Use a poison-smeared diamond to bribe your enemies, or a letter from their superior that is actually a parchment inscribed with *explosive runes*. These are all tactics you employ to ensure that you live to fight another day, and your enemies . . . not so much.

Advancement

As a Shard, you're only as good as people think you are. There is no way to work up the ranks aside from propagating schemes and pulling off deceptions. You must be able to con your fellow Shards as easily as you can a person on the street if you want to become a true charlatan. Pulling off a great scam is one way to get respect, but the better way is to run a scheme so wildly convoluted that even most of your fellow Shards can't piece together how you came out on top, and what exactly you got away with. Steal the credit for successful scams by lying to everyone about your involvement in them . . . and if you can, convince the actual con artists responsible for the job that you were masterminding the whole thing.

Missions

The Shards run hundreds of scams every day, from fleecing visitors with sales of "magic" giant artifacts, to lightening the coin purses of local nobles out to collect works of ancient drow art, to defaming high-placed personages through campaigns of disinformation and rumor-mongering. Shards are expected to spend a great deal of their time spreading falsehoods for falsehoods' sake and planting the specific seeds for larger conspiracies of misdirection. Trips to taverns in various guises, attending meetings dressed as a high-placed official, and other wild jaunts into deceit and fabrication are always on the menu.

Switch jobs in particular are dangerous missions, but lucrative. A group of Shards infiltrates a museum, a wealthy collector's estate, or a dragonmarked enclave and steals an authentic relic/prototype magic item/ancient tome of power/objet d'art and replaces it with a fake of such impressive craftsmanship that the former owners are none the wiser they've been robbed.

Imagination goes a long way, but to create consistently convincing fakes of Xen'drik relics, sometimes the Shards send lesser members to get an eyeball on the real things, or even procure true artifacts from hidden tombs and trapped treasure vaults.

On occasion, all Khyber breaks loose when a widespread scheme of lies crumbles. At these times, Shards band together to perform damage control and shield their members from punishment by deflecting blame for any conspiracy upon non-Shard patsies set up to take the fall.

THE SHARDS IN STORMREACH

"Knew a man tried to outcon a Shard. Came back penniless and with no pants!"

—Tygan Moljane, formerly wealthy merchant

A Hollow Shard can be found nearly anywhere in the city: on a street corner posing as an artificer selling his wares, in the bustle of the Marketplace pawning worthless knock-off relics, or seated by a Storm Lord's side as her personal advisor on any number of topics. All Shards' roots never grow too deep, though, since one thing is for certain: If revealed as frauds, they always beat a hasty retreat rather than face the music. PCs might be duped by the Shards personally or hired by someone who got ripped off to seek justice and get their money back. Alternatively, the PCs might seek out the Shards' assistance. An evil enemy of the characters might demand a powerful relic from their latest trip to Xen'drik's interior, and the Shards can supply the PCs with a duplicate, allowing them to foil their foe's evil plans and escape unscathed.

Structure

The Shards are a loose-knit bunch. Too many con artists spoil the scam, as they say. Members' chaotic proclivities preclude them from working together for lengthy periods of time.

Most Shards wander between "consortiums." Each consortium is a short-term alliance of Shards brought together to enact a dubious moneymaking scheme or engage in a rampant campaign of misinformation to some end or another. Any Honest Shard can convene a consortium, drawing in tricksters and con artists to serve as their catspaws in whatever twisted web they intend to weave. These consortiums don't last long. Most members lie to each other as much as they do their marks, and before long their ulterior motives and dozens of side scams dissolve the consortium. This is never seen as a failure, since any true act of deception breeds more convoluted lies to erase its tracks. The Honest Shard who convened the consortium in the first place is happy to walk away, his goals achieved, and his lessers' selfish schemes in place to take the heat if his con is exposed. Thus it goes in the Shards; if you're not the best liar around, then you're a dupe like everyone else.

NPC Reactions

No one likes a liar. People who know of the Hollow Shards hate them with intensity more appropriate to violent criminals. In Stormreach, death is often preferred

to being made to look the fool. If a Shard is exposed, a lynch mob gathers quickly to dispatch him. Yet others idolize these masters of the con, and even more find the Shards useful, as long as they can be controlled . . . but few realize just how hard this is to do.

IRON WATCH

"They claim to seek truth but choose to live among creatures of flesh. There can be no truth but war between our kind."

—The Lord of Blades

The warforged of the Iron Watch are soldiers, created for battle and hardened by war. The Stormreach Guard is the public face of the law in the city, but the guards are no match for bloodthirsty adventurers or raging giants. When such threats appear, the call goes out for the Iron Watch.

The Iron Watch is an army, but the leaders of the Watch have loftier goals than simply maintaining order. When they aren't cracking heads, the members of the Iron Watch work together to find their place in the world. They don't hate creatures of flesh as most followers of the Lords of Blades do, nor do they see themselves as servants of humanity. These warforged are a newborn race bent on establishing an outpost in a land that might hold the keys to their past and their future.

JOINING THE IRON WATCH

All warforged are welcome to join the Iron Watch, provided that they are aligned with the philosophical goals of the group. The Iron Watch is a force for order within Stormreach, and members need to be comfortable with hierarchy and discipline. The Watch has no hard alignment restrictions, but law and neutrality are strong themes.

Entry Requirements

Race: Warforged.

Special: Like any other arm of the Stormreach Guard, a member must agree to obey the dictates of the Storm Lords and serve at their will without question.

Members of the Iron Watch are assigned roles based on their classes. Fighters, barbarians, warriors, and other close fighters form the bulk of the Watch and are used to maintain order and counter simple disturbances. Rogues, rangers, and other stealth specialists perform reconnaissance, monitoring activities in the city. And the few artificers, sorcerers, and other spellcasters in the Watch serve as support, joining battle when their powers are needed but otherwise devoting their time to researching the warforged form.

The Iron Watch is a military organization. Its members serve a set number of hours each week. Many members of the Iron Watch are dedicated to the organization and never bother going off duty, but they see no shame in having interests beyond the organization.

Even when a guard is off duty, his behavior reflects on the Watch, and insubordination and criminal behavior are not tolerated. The Stormreach Guard is known for graft and corruption, but Iron Watch leader Steeljack holds the warforged to a higher standard. Members don't have to keep the peace on their own time, but they shouldn't disrupt it or become as corrupt as the humans in the Guard.

AFFILIATION SPECIFICS

The following criteria apply to members of the Iron Watch.

CRITERION	AFFILIATION SCORE MODIFIER
<i>One-Time</i>	
Character level	+1 per 2 levels
At least one level of artificer, fighter, marshal ^{MH} , monk, or ranger	+1
At least one level of warforged juggernaut or legendary leader ^{HB}	+1
At least three warforged racial feats	+1
Served in the Last War	+1
Possession of a <i>docent</i>	+1
Craft (any warforged repair) 10 or more ranks	+2
Chaotic alignment	-1
Associates with members of House Cannith	-1
<i>Multiple Use</i>	
Each year of service	+1
Play a critical role in a successful operation	+1
Recover a <i>docent</i>	+1
Obtain new information about ancient warforged	+2
Recover previously unknown warforged components	+2
Damage the reputation of warforged in Stormreach	-1
Fail to report for a duty shift	-1
Insubordinate, accept bribes	-1
Disobey orders resulting in harm to warforged	-3
Allow organics to claim warforged artifacts	-3
Fail to share recovered knowledge	-4

PLAYING A MEMBER OF THE IRON WATCH

During the Last War you fought because you were told to, because your makers convinced you that you had a duty to the nation that had paid for your birth. Today you fight because you realize that war is your true nature. It is your purpose, and it is in battle that you truly feel alive.

War is a comfort to you, but it is not the only reason you serve in the Iron Watch. From listening to Lathe, one of the Adamants, you have learned that your people are more complex than you ever realized. You are a living weapon—not just steel and stone, but a creature of magic. Your potential and your past are equally mysterious. If you are to find the truth about yourself and the destiny of your people, it will be with the Watch.

AFFILIATION SCORE TITLE: BENEFITS AND DUTIES

1–3	Wooden Guard: No benefits. Must serve on active duty a minimum of 20 hours per week.
4–10	Stone Guard: You can use repair facilities to make Craft (armor-smithing) or Craft (weaponsmithing) checks and gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any skill check made to repair warforged. Or you can spend eight hours at the workshop for repairs by one of the local smiths; make a skill check with a +10 modifier to see how much damage is restored. Must serve 56 hours per week.
11–15	Iron Guard: Gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks made in Stormreach; <i>repair moderate damage</i> 1/day at the Watch house in Forge-light. Must serve 60 hours per week and oversee a squad of Stone and Wooden Guards.
16–22	Steel Guard: Can request access to the Iron Council, <i>repair serious damage</i> 1/day at the Watch house in Forge-light. No duty schedule, but called for special assignments.
23 or higher	Adamant: Once per day, increase damage reduction by 10 points (this stacks with any damage reduction you already possess). No duty schedule, but called for special assignments that might take you across the world or to other planes.

The leaders of the Iron Watch don't hate organic beings, but there are certain things no creature of flesh can understand. You stand awake each night while your human friends sleep and dream. You watch them eat and drink, laughing and enjoying physical pleasures. You take pleasure in battle, in fulfilling your function. But you find comfort in the company of other warforged, the only ones who understand the nature of your life.

You have little need for shelter, but even so the Watch house in Forge-light provides you with a place to socialize with other warforged, and includes research and training facilities. Thanks to the many weapon-smiths and armorsmiths in the Watch, you have access to repair spells based on your rank, and you can purchase weapons and shields with up to a +1 enhancement value at a 15% discount.

The artificers of the Iron Watch maintain an armory equipped with *oils of repair* and wands holding a variety of defensive spells, along with a small selection of warforged components—*armblades*, *essence disks*, and others. These tools are never sold, but rather are

distributed as necessary for specific assignments. If you are facing a rampaging fire elemental, you might be given a charge of *resist energy*. The items in the armory are never simply given away, and in the case of components, they must be returned after a mission.

Combat

You are a soldier, and most of your life has been spent in war. You might not be a master tactician, but you wouldn't have survived this long if you were a fool. You're not a petty member of the Stormreach Guard, tasked to shake down cutpurses and smugglers. The Iron Watch is deployed to combat serious threats to the city, and overcoming such challenges requires brains as well as brawn. Work in concert with your companions. Identify and eliminate the most dangerous opponents as quickly as possible. Learn whatever you can before the battle and let the artificers and sorcerers provide you with enhancement and defense. Listen to the officers and follow the battle plan. As far as you're concerned, every fight is a war.

Advancement

The Iron Watch is organized like an army. Time served and quality of service are critical to advancement. As a member of the Watch, you are allowed to speak your mind, but insubordination isn't tolerated. You can disagree with one of the Adamants or any other member of the Watch, but if you must challenge a superior, do it at a time and in a manner that will not threaten morale or mission. If you disobey orders and members of the Watch are hurt, there will be consequences.

Military service is the primary path to advancement, and the main activity of the Watch within the city. But the Iron Watch also seeks to unlock the mysteries of the warforged, secrets that might be held in Xen'drik. Bringing new knowledge to the Watch is as good a way to earn advancement in the ranks as stopping a riot at the Red Ring. On the other hand, allowing secrets of the warforged to fall into enemy hands—especially those of House Cannith—could have serious consequences.

Missions

The Iron Watch is rarely called into service, so most of your time on duty is spent drilling, sparring, or putting your craft skills to work. Smith, the Adamant who is also an artificer, says that the Storm Lords are afraid of appearing too dependent on the warforged; they call on the Watch against serious threats to their power, but have yet to deploy the warforged against groups such as the Titans or the Swords of Karrn. If you're skilled at stealth, you'll be placed on reconnaissance duty, spying on the various gangs or power groups in the city. As far as you know, Steeljack sanctions these operations; the Storm Lords don't even know about them.

Higher-ranking members of the Watch coordinate military operations, but they serve in other roles as well. Artificers and sorcerers engage in mystical research. The most capable members of the Watch are sent into Xen'drik or the ruins beneath the city in search of components and knowledge from the past. Such operations sometimes involve full teams of warforged, but if you have adventuring companions you enjoy working with, you might be given a goal to accomplish together. If your companions earn Steeljack's trust, he might work with you openly; otherwise, the mission is given in secret, and you have to find a way to obtain a *docent* or hide a *schema* without drawing attention.

Although the leaders of the Iron Watch don't hate humans the way the Lord of Blades does, they're keenly interested in protecting the warforged. You've heard rumors about Steel Guards being sent on covert operations against House Cannith—though it's possible these are just stories.

THE WATCH IN STORMREACH

"I don't like them Karrnathi wolves, not one bit. But at least they're human. These iron men . . . it was a bad day when the first of them came to Stormreach."

—Three-Tooth Cam, dockworker

Smith is right; the Storm Lords don't like to rely on the warforged. But the Stormreach Guard is a flawed

NEW FEAT: WAND BONDING [WARFORGED]

As a magical being of wood and metal, you have learned to power wands with your own energy.

Prerequisites: Warforged, ability to spontaneously cast arcane spells or infusions.

Benefit: When activating a wand, you can choose to sacrifice an arcane spell slot or infusion slot of the level of the spell to be cast from the wand (or a higher level) instead of using one of the charges in the wand. In addition to powering the wand, this increases the

caster level of the effect by one for every five caster levels you possess. A wand must have at least one charge for you to activate it in this way.

Special: A warforged sorcerer can take Wand Bonding as a bonus feat at 1st level in place of the summon familiar class feature.

A warforged artificer can add this feat to the list of available bonus feats.

tool, and when things go bad, the Iron Watch can be relied on to clean up the mess. Law enforcement is the job of the Iron Watch, but its driving passion is the evolution of the warforged. A team of Iron Watch members could be encountered in a quori arsenal in the jungle or a Cul'sir workshop deep below Stormreach. Depending on the choices the PCs make, the Iron Watch could help the party unlock the mysteries of the past.

The Storm Lords pay Steeljack for the services of the Watch, but individual soldiers don't receive wages; instead, the gold is invested in expanding the unit's facilities. The leaders of the Watch have no interest in replacing humanity, but they are building a warforged community, and this effort requires sacrifice.

The Iron Watch might act as a force capable of opposing any characters who decide to seriously disrupt the workings of the city or challenge the Storm Lords. Although the members of the Watch aren't extremely high level, they are experienced soldiers who have worked together for years or even decades. They make careful, strategic decisions based on observation of the enemy, and employ *weapon augmentation*, *armor enhancement*, and similar effects to address the specific abilities of opponents. The Watch is also very familiar with the city and can predict the movement of its quarry.

The members of the Iron Watch aren't simply a police force; they are trying to explore the place of the warforged in the world. For a warforged player character, the Iron Watch can be a valuable ally. Even if a PC chooses not to become a full member of the Watch, Steeljack is always interested in talking with other warforged and learning about their beliefs and experiences. The Iron Watch might have uncovered secrets in its exploration of Xen'drik that could be useful to adventurers, warforged or not. And if a hero joins the Watch and rises in its ranks, he could be one of the founders of a new warforged civilization.

The *docents* of the Iron Council are a wild card in this equation. They might be advisors, or they might be masterminds using the warforged to fulfill a mysterious agenda. The *docent* Shira (SX 154) is an example of the sort of superior *docent* that could be involved in such a scheme. A *docent* of the Iron Council might even request a pairing with a warforged PC, claiming that the young warforged was specifically designed to work with the ancient artifact. Could this claim be true?

Structure

The approximately 170-member Iron Watch is based in Forgeflight. Stone Guards serve in six-person squads commanded by a member of the Iron Guard. Squads are paired into platoons under the command of a Steel Guard. In addition to these ten standard platoons, Steeljack commands an elite platoon formed of members of the Steel and Iron Guards. The remaining members of the Watch focus on research

and support. Warforged who can't work on a team are quickly dismissed.

The Iron Watch is smooth and efficient, and its soldiers are among the best in Khorvaire. Most members of the Watch are fighters mixed with rangers and barbarians, and a handful of rogues, monks, artificers, and sorcerers. The typical member of the Wooden Guard is 2nd or 3rd level; Stone Guards are 4th level; Iron Guards are 5th level; Steel Guards are 6th level; and Adamants are 7th level or higher. At the moment the bulk of the corps are Stone Guards, and only three members hold the title of Adamant; however, this could easily change.

The three current Adamants of the Iron Watch are Steeljack, Smith, and Lathe.

Steeljack (N warforged fighter 8/bard 1) is the charismatic leader of the Iron Watch. He is a deadly fighter with a gift for inspiring warforged and questioning the world around him. During the Last War he served in the Brelish army under a commander who despised the warforged, abusing his troops and sacrificing them needlessly. After seeing one too many of his comrades shattered on the battlefield, Steeljack took his squad, commandeered a boat, and made his way to Stormreach. In time Storm Lord Paulo Omaren, who was looking for a force to counter the Amanatus' hold on the Stormreach Guard, contacted him, and so the Iron Watch was born. Steeljack feels a debt to Omaren and intends to honor his commitment to Stormreach, but his ultimate interest lies in creating a haven for his people.

Smith (N warforged artificer 9) served alongside Steeljack. Designed to provide battlefield support, he has become one of the most gifted warforged artificers in Eberron. He is fascinated by the *docents*, quorforged, and other mysteries of Xen'drik, and spends his time studying the past or crafting magic items for the unit. His work with warforged components has allowed him to discover the Wand Bonding ability, which he has taught to a number of other mystics in the Watch.

Lathe (LN warforged monk 11) is a mystery. He spends most of his time in meditation, and he has learned to manipulate the warforged body in strange ways. He has begun teaching these arts to members of the Wooden Guard, resulting in the unusual number of warforged monks in Stormreach. Some say that he wasn't actually built by House Cannith, and that he emerged from the dungeons beneath Stormreach after the Iron Watch was established. Perhaps this is true, and Lathe is an ancient warforged trying to guide the modern 'forged down a particular path.

As far as most people know, the Adamants are the ruling body of the Iron Watch. But another force works within the Watch: the Iron Council, the name given to the twelve *docents* the Watch has recovered. The Adamants each carry one of these *docents*, and the remaining nine are stored in the armory, attached to a relic that allows them to communicate with one



The Adamants hope to forge
a new future for their people

another. These *docents* might simply be sources of information—advisors who have invaluable knowledge of the past that help guide the members of the Iron Watch as they explore Xen'drik. It's also possible that the council has a more sinister agenda, and that it is using the Watch to accomplish its goals. Are these *docents* simply intelligent magic items? Or could they be possessed—vessels for quori spirits, phylacteries of ancient liches, or something even stranger and more terrible?

NPC Reactions

The Iron Watch is well known in Stormreach. This city has no love for the law, but for many, fear outweighs hostility; as a result, most inhabitants have an indifferent attitude when dealing with the Iron Watch. The Swords of Karrn (page 77) are specifically unfriendly.

STEEL AND STONE: WARFORGED MONKS

The warforged philosopher Lathe has spent years contemplating the nature of his people. Though warforged are formed of steel, stone, wood, and leather, they are alive. Their bodies can evolve, as shown by the armor spikes of the warforged juggernaut and the abilities of the Reforged. In contemplating these mysteries, Lathe has unlocked some of the hidden

powers of the warforged form, and he can teach these secrets (alternative class features) to warforged monks who study with the Iron Watch.

Harmonious Form

Prerequisite: Warforged.

Level: Monk 5.

Replaces: Purity of body.

Benefit: By contemplating the ideal state of your body, you mend leather and wood and repair damage you have incurred. If you meditate for 8 hours, you recover twice your character level in hit points. You cannot take any action when engaged in meditation, but you can meditate while someone else is repairing you using a Craft skill.

Shifting Steel

Prerequisite: Warforged.

Level: Monk 11.

Replaces: Diamond body.

Benefit: You are a living weapon, and your full understanding of your true nature gives you greater control over your body. Just as a warforged juggernaut produces armor spikes from its body, you can extend spikes from your skin or sharpen the edge of your hand to a razor edge. When making an unarmed strike, you can choose to deal slashing or piercing damage instead of bludgeoning damage.



There are many secrets
hidden in the darkness
below Stormreach.

And the Qar Hantar'kul drow would kill
to keep them.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEYOND THE CITY

A walk from the bustling city center toward the city's outskirts demonstrates just how tenuously Stormreach grips the savage shoreline of Xen'drik. The crumbling walls surrounding the city slough flakes of marble and dust like dead skin. They deteriorate faster and faster the farther one wanders inland. Outside the city, the watchtowers and giant ramparts surrender to a savage frontier. Legions of creepers lay siege, crawling and crisscrossing up 50-foot walls until the white-gray stones vanish altogether beneath a verdant landscape of vines and leaves. At its edges, Stormreach is nothing more than a broken vestige of past civilizations, long ago claimed by the jungle.

The stench of the sewers and squalor dissipates into the heady scent of wild flowers and hot jungle, tinged with sulfuric mist riding the wind down from distance volcano peaks. The grunting calls of beasts and the lyrical parlanche of songbirds dispels the hum of the city's markets and violent streets. Beyond Stormreach's hinterland lies the mist-shrouded frontier of Xen'drik, and myriad vistas of unimaginable adventure.

Stormreach is a city defined by its surroundings, a pinprick of civilization on an otherwise untamed tapestry of unforgiving wilderness. The city stands on the lip of Xen'drik's savage maw, just one lunge away from being swallowed up entirely by the teeming jungle.

Although the city thrums with excitement and danger, many adventurers leave Stormreach within days of their arrival. The interior of Xen'drik lures most to their glory or death. Stormreach is little more than a place to dock their ship and buy supplies before heading off to the wild frontier. Unlike with most other cities in Eberron, Stormreach's hinterlands are not dotted with homesteads and small villages. Instead of extending its influence into the surrounding wilds, Stormreach fights every day to keep back the savage landscape.

Native tribes of giants, drow, and stranger beings come to Stormreach to trade. Monsters lurk just outside its walls. And every week sees a mass exodus of adventurers, explorers, and scholars into the wilds.

This chapter includes information, adventure hooks, and ideas for how to connect Stormreach to its surrounding environs. For more details on the sprawling wilderness of the shattered land, see *Secrets of Xen'drik*.

CLASHING CULTURES

Since the downfall of the ancient giants, no nation has risen to dominate the continent of Xen'drik. This could be due to the hostile environment and vicious monsters. Or it could be the result of epic curses laid by the dragons who destroyed the land. The storytellers of Rushemé say that those who come too close to the power of the old giants fall prey to the Du'rashka Tul, a madness that can cause an entire nation to implode in homicidal rage. Whatever the reason, the people of Xen'drik live in nomadic tribes or small city-states, with populations in the hundreds or thousands.

A surprising number of intelligent humanoids make their homes within striking distance of Stormreach. Campfire stories speak of hidden cities of shape-changing spiderfolk, living shadows, and far stranger things. Although these tales might be mere myth, a few known forces in the region can have an impact on adventurers who remain in Stormreach.

DROW

For many people, the name "Xen'drik" conjures images of tattooed drow sacrificing hapless explorers to scorpion idols. These stories might be rooted in truth, but judging the drow on the basis of these few encounters is like making a judgment about humanity based solely on a visit to Flamekeep. Drow civilization takes many forms. The Umbragen drow fight a war in Khyber, while the Sulatar bind elementals in ancient giant cities. The Qaltiar tribes dedicate themselves to hunting giants. Others devote themselves to tribal feuds, pursuing vendettas that have lasted for thousands of years. The Vulkooridals—the scorpion-worshippers featured in most tales—are the dominant drow culture along the northern coast, but they come from a mass of nomadic tribes, each with its own unique customs. Some are dedicated solely to the Scorpion, while others see Vulkoor as just one of the many spirits of the natural

world. Although most drow avoid Stormreach, a few tribes maintain ties to the city.

Urban Drow: A few dozen drow can be found scattered around Stormreach. Some serve as wilderness guides or find other ways to make an honest living. However, many turn to violence or a life in the shadows, dying in alleys or on the sand of the Red Ring. The majority of urban drow are exiles from Vulkoori tribes, driven out for terrible crimes or breaking taboos. However, in the harsh world of the drow, mercy is considered a crime, and drow who don't subscribe to their race's ruthless ways come to the city to escape the cruel life of the wilds.

Most of the drow within the city are settlers from scattered tribes. Old feuds remain strong even when the tribe has been left behind, and urban drow rarely seek the company of others of their kind unless they come from the same tribe. Some have found love within the city, whether temporary or long-term, and a handful of half-drow make their homes in Stormreach as well.

The Hantar'kul: The name of this tribal tradition translates to "Blood Hunters," and its members worship Vulkoor the Cunning (*SX* 72). The drow of the Hantar'kul believe that it is the destiny of their people to rule over all Xen'drik. They despise the giants and other creatures of the shattered land, but they believe that dominance over these creatures is assured; it is foreigners that they see as a threat. As such, the Hantar'kul actively prey on explorers who venture into the depths of Xen'drik. They have been responsible for the destruction of a number of mining and farming settlements, and the Hantar'kul present an ongoing threat to House Tharashk and House Vadalis operations. Although they hate all foreigners, the Hantar'kul have a special vendetta against the elves of Aerenal and Valenar and the drow and half-drow who live within Stormreach.

As with many other drow traditions, the Hantar'kul mantle is borne by a number of different drow tribes. These tribes respect one another but rarely work together, and each has slightly different traditions. The tribe that poses the greatest threat to Stormreach is the Qar Hantar'kul, which uses a curved double-bladed dagger as its emblem. The Qar tribe has recently set up camp in the tunnels below Stormreach; the drow hope to find powerful weapons in the deep dungeons and to establish a strong foothold from which to strike at the foreigners in the world above.

Most Hantar'kul fit the traditional image of the Vulkoori drow, including the pale tattoos and chitin armor. However, the Blood Hunters recognize the power of the past, and they constantly search for magic items and weapons they can use. As students of Vulkoor the Cunning, their numbers include rogues, rangers, assassins, and monks. If the DM is using *Tome of Battle*, a Hantar'kul tribe might include swordsages specializing in the Shadow Hand, Diamond Mind,

and Setting Sun disciplines—ancient traditions dating back to the elf–giant war.

The Umbragen: When the dragons devastated Xen'drik, the ancestors of the Umbragen fled into Khyber. They established a city-state beneath an area known as the Ring of Storms. Khyber is a deadly place, and in their quest for survival these drow established a spiritual bond to a dark force known as the Umbra, bartering a piece of their race's soul in exchange for power. For thousands of years this situation persisted, but over the last decade a new enemy has risen in the depths—the army of the daelkyr lord Belashyrra. The Umbragen are fighting a losing battle in the darkness, and they are desperate to find a way to keep their city and their pride. Umbragen strike teams are exploring Xen'drik in search of weapons, and adventurers could encounter Umbragen seekers below Stormreach, or cross paths with Umbragen spies in the city itself. Drow pride won't let them ask strangers for assistance, but the Umbragen might try to trick adventurers into fighting their foes.

Because of their connection with the Umbra, Umbragen drow frequently have warlock (*CAr*) or sorcerer levels and spells or invocations tied to darkness or cold. They are more civilized than the Vulkooridal and use metal weapons and armor, often magical.

GIANTS

Although only a handful of drow live in Stormreach, it's hard for any traveler to forget about the giants. The titanic ruins are a constant reminder of the prior inhabitants, while those who wish to see true giants need only go to the Tents of Rushemé. Solitary giants live across northern Xen'drik, from cloud giants hiding in the sky to jungle giants (*SX*) hunting mighty beasts in the wilds. Adventurers can encounter distinct giant cultures in Stormreach or beyond.

In dealing with the giants of Xen'drik, it's important to bear in mind that the giants have not always been such a divergent species. Many scholars claim that all modern giants—stone and hill, fire and frost—share a common biological ancestor, beyond the mythical titans. Some adventurers speak of encounters with primordial giants or eldritch giants, and this could be the answer to these stories. In any case, evidence exists that a few of the giant subspecies—such as the fire giants of the Sul'at League—existed prior to the great cataclysm. But others, most notably the hill giants, are said to be the result of curses unleashed in that war . . . powers unleashed by the dragons to prevent any giant nation from rising to its prior heights.

The Giants of Rushemé: Members of the Rushemé tribes can be found in the tent city southwest of Stormreach, but they are also scattered across northern Xen'drik. These nomads are a loose association of tribes. Rushemé is bound together by common traditions and a desire for peaceful coexistence, but each tribe has its own stories and customs. Most of the

Rushemé tribes are hill giants or jungle giants who live simple, primitive lives, but there are exceptions. More information about the giants of Rushemé can be found on page 111.

The Battalion of the Basalt Towers: Although this movement is less than a thousand years old, the fire giants trace their ancestry back to Adaxus, an infamous prince of the Sul'at League known for his demonic alliances. The wizards of the Battalion lack Adaxus's legendary power to bind and command fiends, but they frequently strike bargains with evil spirits to gain greater power. Giants of the Battalion use possessed weapons or armor and can serve as vessels for fiendish beings (*ECS* 100–102).

The Battalion of the Basalt Towers has always been hostile to the people of Stormreach, and at the height of its power it launched a siege of the city. The united forces of Stormreach and Rushemé broke the assault, but the Battalion has spent decades rebuilding its strength and might be preparing for another attack. It is unclear whether the giants hate foreigners or if they seek a power that lies within or below Stormreach. Either way, their only interest in humanity is as fodder for the sacrificial blade. The Battalion of the Basalt Towers has also clashed with the Sulatar drow, who typically inhabit the old cities of the Sul'at League.

The giants of the Battalion are barbarians, who attribute their rage to the malevolent spirit they revere. Their leaders are warlocks and wizards who pursue Adaxus's work.

The Dominion of Purity: Giants live longer than humans, and both before and after the great devastation, the giants have been slow to change. The Dominion of Purity is proving an exception to this rule. The first word of this movement reached Stormreach less than a decade ago, but if stories are to be believed, dozens of tribes and thousands of giants are now part of the Dominion. The power behind this alliance is a being that calls himself the Voice of the Titans. To date no human has encountered the Voice, but if the stories are to be believed, he possesses magical powers and remarkable charisma. His greatest lure is his promise that he will not only restore the ancient nations of Xen'drik, but that he will reverse the curse of the titans that makes every succeeding generation of giants less powerful than the last. He promises to elevate hill giants, jungle giants, and all others to the status of their ancestors. It's unclear if the Voice has offered any proof to support his claims, but his words have impact. Many giants join him of their own free will, and evidence suggests that others are coerced by magic or physical force. In the past, such efforts have always been dispersed by curses like the Du'rashka Tul. It might be that the Voice of the Titans is leading his followers to a similar fate, or he might truly have found a way to overcome the ancient blights. If this is the case, the Dominion could soon become a threat to all the inhabitants of Xen'drik.



Fiendish allies make the giants of the Basalt Towers deadly foes

The true nature of the Voice of the Titans remains a mystery. No form of divination magic has been able to locate him; either he possesses some unique power, or he is carrying an artifact that shields him from spying eyes. Tales from giants who have met him suggest that he might be a primordial storm giant, but it is possible that he is an eldritch giant (*MM3* 56) or even a dragon or fiend masquerading as a giant. His ultimate goal is equally mysterious. His primary goal is to expand his influence across other groups of giants, but he has also been collecting relics of the past.

A number of circumstances could bring the Dominion of Purity to Stormreach. If the tribes of Rushemé fall under pressure to swear fealty to the Voice, members of the Dominion could come to Stormreach and threaten Gaulronak. Adventurers could encounter a group of giant explorers searching

for a treasure beneath Stormreach. Depending on the true nature of the Voice of the Titans, Antaeus (page 158) could see the Voice as an ally or a mortal enemy, in which case he might turn to adventurers to help eliminate the Dominion.

YUAN-TI

Although they are relatively few in number, the intelligence and magical sophistication of the yuan-ti makes them a threat that cannot be easily dismissed. The yuan-ti arrived in Xen'drik as refugees, having been driven first from their homeland of Sarlona and then from Argonnessen. With every exodus, the personality of the yuan-ti grew darker and more hateful. In Eberron, it is a rare thing for an entire intelligent species to adhere to a single alignment; nonetheless, the yuan-ti of Xen'drik truly seem to be evil by nature.

The Sarlonans claimed that the yuan-ti were shaped by one of the ancient lords of the Age of Demons. If this is true, then it's possible that as the yuan-ti traveled from continent to continent, they passed over the tombs of additional demon lords, and each of these further infected the spirit of the race. In Argonnessen, Tiamat sunk her claws into the serpentfolk. In Xen'drik, they have been touched by the Scar that Abides (see page 156). If this is true, then the evil nature of the yuan-ti is in essence a curse—the touch of mighty fiends stretching back through the ages.

The yuan-ti care nothing for these theories. They have no loyalty to the Lords of Dust or their masters,

and they show equal disdain for the aberrations that flock to the banner of the Dragon Below. Proud and spiteful, the yuan-ti intend to wreak vengeance on all who have ever crossed them, from the dragons of Argonnessen to the humans whose ancestors drove them from Sarlona.

For now, the yuan-ti are recovering from their humiliation in Argonnessen and building their strength. One mighty serpentine wizard has been developing an eldritch machine capable of transforming humanoids into reptilian creatures, wretches conditioned to be innately subservient to the yuan-ti. For the moment this work is still theoretical, and the wizard is testing elixirs and spells on captured travelers. If the machine is completed, Stormreach would make a tempting target; adventurers sailing into the harbor could find a city of bloodthirsty snakefolk.

On a smaller scale, the yuan-ti are always looking for ways to turn the great powers of Eberron against one another, and they are especially eager to hurt the dragons of Argonnessen. The yuan-ti haven't established a major presence in Stormreach, but it would be a simple matter for a pureblood to build a cult on Temple Row, or to start a new gang to compete with the Bilge Rats. In the rough-and-tumble streets of the Harbor district, these "Gutter Snakes" could easily glide beneath the public eye. Or they could go deeper still and lay claim to one of the dungeons below the city . . . though in doing so, they might risk waking a force even more ancient and evil than the yuan-ti.

THREATS TO STORMREACH

Stormreach is a city perched on the edge of annihilation. Surrounded by a savage frontier filled with fierce giants, marauding monsters, and worse, the city exists under the constant threat of siege. The ruined walls and watchtowers of a dozen civilizations stand in testament to the inherent danger of residing on Xen'drik's wild shore. Whatever fell magic destroyed the titans' empire thousands of years past lingers on in the threat of cataclysmic curses such as the Du'rashka Tul and the propensity for earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic upheaval and other natural (and unnatural) calamities. The people of Stormreach gaze toward the horizon with wary eyes, ever watchful for the next powerful entity to gaze back at them with destructive intent.

XARKON, THE STORMHEART

Less than a day away from the city as the dragon flies, a single sandstone spire on a dusty windblown plateau reaches high into an ever-raging tempest. This is the den of Xarkon, also called the Stormheart, a mighty blue dragon who glares toward the city of Stormreach with fierce hate festering in his soul.

Xarkon's father Xakolondar was a member of a draconic sect that demanded the destruction of



The yuan-ti don't have a strong presence in Stormreach . . . yet

humanity as a solution to the uncertain threat of the dragonmarks. When the other dragons disagreed, Xakolondar abandoned Argonnessen and made a new home in Xen'drik. Shortly after human pirates made their beachhead at the giant ruins, Xakolondar took it upon himself to scour them from the face of his home. Captain Delera Omaren, pirate queen and soon to be Storm Lord of the city, felled the blue dragon; Lady Paulo Omaren has long sought to learn how her ancestor accomplished such an epic task.

Xarkon was younger then and untested, but he has grown older and more powerful with each passing century. Now the dragon is in his prime, and his rage smolders toward the teeming city built by his father's murderer. Xarkon has yet to mount a full attack on Stormreach, but more than a few raids by giants and wyverns are attributed to his influence. The dragon is a grave threat, but his force of desert giants, wyverns, and manticores makes Stormheart an even more dire menace to the city.

Xarkon the Stormheart: hp 276; see the sample mature adult blue dragon on *MM* 73.

ZLORTHARKIS, KING BENEATH THE WAVES

Pirates and merchants alike fear the kraken. Most humans see these creatures as savage monsters, but the sahuagin know better. Sahuagin legends hint at aquatic battles between dragons and krakens taking place as far back as the Age of Demons. The Lords of Dust manipulate the surface lands, but krakens and aboleths are the ancient horrors of the ocean floor—brilliant and mighty creatures that manipulate the powers of the deep. Some sahuagin clans willingly serve these mighty creatures; others violently oppose them, seeking to destroy and devour them in accordance with the rituals of the true sahuagin god.

In recent months, kraken activity has increased in the Thunder Sea. The sahuagin who deal with the sailors of Stormreach say that this is the work of the kraken Zlortharkis, an aquatic fiend of tremendous cunning and might. A number of ships have fallen to the mighty tentacles of the King beneath the Waves, but the kraken has never struck a Lyrandar vessel. This fact might simply be coincidence, but a myth within the house claims that the first Lyrandar lords live on as krakens in the depths. If there is any truth to this legend, the kraken Zlortharkis could be Lyran himself, and his actions could be the beginning of a new campaign to ensure that his children have supreme dominion over the waves.

Whether Zlortharkis has the mind of a fiend or a Lyrandar patriarch, he is a threat to the sahuagin of the region and the people of Stormreach. He might seek to subjugate the sahuagin or demand tribute from the Storm Lords. A quest to defeat the King

beneath the Waves could lead to an alliance with the sahuagin, as adventurers from the surface world join forces with the heroes of the deeps to hunt down this mighty beast.

ZLORTHARKIS

CR 15

Half-fiendish kraken

NE Gargantuan outsider (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +30, Spot +30

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Infernal, Kuo-Toa, Mabran, Sahuagin, Undercommon

AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 21

hp 310 (20 HD)

Immune poison; **DR** 10/magic

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 30

Fort +22, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

Speed swim 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee 2 tentacles +30 each (3d6+14/19–20) and 6 arms +25 each (1d6+7) and bite +25 (4d6+7)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (tentacle 60 ft., arm 30 ft.)

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, constrict (2d8+14 tentacle, 1d6+7 arm), improved grab, Improved Trip, smite good 1/day (+20 damage)

Base Atk +20; **Grp** +46

Special Actions ink cloud, jet

Spell-Like Abilities (CL varies):

3/day (CL 20th)—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 20), *unholy aura* (DC 24)

1/day (CL 20th)—*blasphemy* (DC 23), *contagion* (DC 19), *desecrate*, *destruction* (DC 23), *horrid wilting* (DC 24), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 20)

1/day (CL 9th)—*control weather*, *control winds*, *dominate animal* (DC 21), *resist energy*

Abilities Str 38, Dex 14, Con 31, Int 25, Wis 20, Cha 22
SQ half-fiend traits

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will

Skills Concentration +34, Diplomacy +31, Heal +30, Hide +20, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (geography) +30, Knowledge (nature) +30, Knowledge (the planes) +30, Listen +30, Search +30, Sense Motive +28, Spot +30, Survival +28, Swim +37, Use Magic Device +29

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Zlortharkis must hit an opponent with an arm or tentacle attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If he wins the grapple, he establishes a hold and can constrict.

Ink Cloud (Ex) Zlortharkis can emit a cloud of ink in an 80-foot spread once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness.

Jet (Ex) Zlortharkis can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. He must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity.



KRAA'ARK LORS, LORD OF THE BLACK CLOUDS

South of Stormreach, a mass of black clouds forms a permanent blot on the horizon, and dark wings cast long shadows on the forlorn earth. The sky demesne of Kraa'ark Lors is a wondrous citadel in the clouds, hovering atop thunderheads and swirling in dark mists. Also called the Roc King and Lord of the Black Clouds, Kraa'ark is a mighty roc awakened by powerful druid magic of long ago. The roc claims to be immortal, another trait granted to the magical beast by whatever magic awakened its mind.

Kraa'ark Lors sees Stormreach as a blight on the natural wonder of Xen'drik. The roc has long sought to annihilate its populace and reduce the city to so much rubble. So far, Rushemé mystics have held the Roc King at bay with rituals and sacrifices. If the city's relationship with the giants of Rushemé deteriorates, Kraa'ark Lors might bring down calamity upon Stormreach.

KRAA'ARK LORS, THE ROC KING

CR 18

Male awakened roc druid 9

N Gargantuan magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +34, **Spot** +38

AC 26, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 19

hp 333 (29 HD)

Fort +24, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16; resist nature's lure

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft.

Melee 2 talons +34 each (3d6+12) and bite +32 (2d8+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +45

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 9th):

5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 17)

4th—*cure serious wounds* (2)

3th—*call lightning* (DC 15) (2), *greater magic fang*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *lesser restoration* (2), *owl's wisdom*

1st—*cure light wounds* (4), *obscuring mist*

0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *resistance*

Abilities Str 34, Dex 16, Con 24, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 14

SQ nature sense, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy, wild shape 3/day, woodland stride

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (talons), Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Run, Snatch, Wingover

Skills Climb +35, Concentration +25, Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Hide +14, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +34, Spot +38, Survival +25

Possessions orb of storms, ring of protection +4, ring of elemental command (air)

HEADING INLAND

Launching an expedition to Xen'drik's interior means choosing a method of transportation. Water taxis navigate the coast to the mouth of the Hydra where river barges creep downriver into Xen'drik's wilds. Overland on horse or foot is slow going, but the easiest way to locate hidden ruins or track quarry. Although an airship would seem like an ideal solution, the skies of Xen'drik are extremely dangerous. House Lyrandar has lost a number of vessels on exploratory missions and placed a general ban on any unnecessary air travel in Xen'drik; those who wish to take to the sky will have better luck purchasing flying mounts from House Vadalis.

Those in need of secrecy or an unobserved departure might leave the city by navigating the complex of dungeons sprawling beneath it. The subterranean tunnels stretch out miles in every direction, emerging in a shaded grove or in another set of giant ruins far from prying eyes. Some even extend out to flooded lava tubes beneath the floor of the Thunder Sea. Maps of the continent are unreliable. The Traveler's Curse (SX 25) makes even the most accurate maps unreliable, and in any event, most maps for sale are forgeries created by the Hollow Shards (page 114).

MYSTICAL GUIDANCE

Many explorers seek divination pertaining to the outcome of their expedition before they set off. It has become customary to "read the portents" before disembarking from Stormreach, and it is considered ill fortune to ignore omens and signs before braving

Xen'drik's interior. As a result, divination has become big business in the city, as adventurers hope to garner a few lifesaving tips before they head out.

Augury is a common business in any city. In Khorvaire, House Medani licenses professional augurs (magewrights capable of casting *augury* or *divination*), allowing customers to invest in prognostication with confidence. But Medani has shown little interest in Stormreach. A few true augurs live throughout the city, but most fortunetellers' veiled stalls and curtained incense-spewing hovels are fronts for the Hollow Shards. The Shards dole out vague advice or read fake portents proclaiming an expedition's success. These charlatans give only positive readings (they find their clients tip far better in this case), though they might be paid off by a third party—a worried relative or friend who wants to dissuade a loved one from braving the savage frontier, or a rival who wishes to reach the goal first—to herald terrifying portents of doom awaiting the client in Xen'drik's wilds.

One fortuneteller whose predictions consistently prove accurate is a strange, hulking hobgoblin named Krelldo. Krelldo has obviously seen at least twenty winters, but he claims to be a child of only eight years. He chatters to himself and plays with wooden lightning rails and toy monsters in a small hovel in Cross. A crotchety old female half-orc named Skurga, who is either his guardian or his wife, tends him day and night. Though Krelldo appears mad and quite certain he is a small child, if he is given a wooden toy of decent quality (and a small fee is paid to Skurga) he offers to "talk to the spirits." The gibbering hobgoblin immediately begins to foam at the mouth and bleed from his nose as his eyes roll back into his head. A guttural howl, more befitting a fiend than a child or a hobgoblin, bursts from Krelldo's throat, and he yowls out a prophecy concerning the characters' upcoming expedition. Twisted and layered in meaning though they might be, Krelldo's prophecies have an eerie tendency to come true.

SPECIALTY GOODS AND SERVICES

Mounting an expedition from Stormreach has certain advantages—proximity, to be sure, but also the availability of specialized commodities developed by generations of explorers.

Premium Charts and Maps

Whether because of the Traveler's Curse or the Hollow Shards, most maps of Xen'drik available in Stormreach are worse than inaccurate. However, a few maps—especially those created by drow, giants, or other natives of the region—can prove helpful, though only when one describes a small region of land. If an explorer can find such a map, it provides a +2 bonus on Survival checks to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards in the region it covers.

Premium Glyphbooks

Von Ruthvek's Splendors of the South (page 38) offers several specialized glyphbooks (*ECS* 121) that deal with particular historical eras or regions of Xen'drik. If adventurers have advance information on the ruins targeted for an upcoming expedition, they can purchase a special glyphbook for 50 gp that grants an additional +2 circumstance bonus (for a total of +6) on Decipher Script checks for that region.

Specialized Clothing and Guidebooks

Havulak Prospecting (page 30) and its competitor the Thrifty Traveler (page 51) outfit explorers for journeys into Xen'drik's interior. Both shops offer cold weather outfits and explorer's and traveler's outfits. For those who want to adventure in style, the Marketplace bazaar's Far Davandi sells the same kinds of outfits but woven with glameweave (*ECS* 122).

Havulak Prospecting sells guidebooks outlining hazards in different regions of Xen'drik. Each guidebook costs 50 gp and provides a +3 bonus on Survival checks to find food or shelter in a specific region. Havulak himself writes bits and pieces of the books. Foiled too many times by the Traveler's Curse, he gave up his dream of mapping the continent years ago, now focusing his attention on survival tips that are usually valid regardless of the land's strange shifts.

FREELANCE GUIDES

Not every guide offering his or her services in the city is a member of the Wayfinder Foundation. Stormreach is rife with vagabonds for hire and independent knowledgeable guides. Natives of Xen'drik's interior are lured to Stormreach by the prospect of earning gold or receiving wonders from across the seas in payment for their services. They earn their pay by taking expeditions into the dangerous territory of their home region. These guides barely veil their savagery and greedy intent, and a few murder their employers shortly after they leave the relative safety of Stormreach. Wise explorers offer their native guides a small advance fee when they embark on the expedition and keep the rest of the pay sequestered somewhere in the city, to be doled out only upon their safe return.

Still, for every sinister drow, giant, or other native guide, at least one other honorable individual sees it as his or her duty to safeguard visitors interested in the culture and lands of Xen'drik. The PCs might hire any of the guides described below (most of which are upstanding) for an expedition into the shattered land.

Jargret Gristrock: Jargret (LN female stone giant ranger 2/expert 2) is a no-nonsense stone giant who acts as a guide only to expeditions seeking out lost giant ruins. She works for a meager fee compared to other guides, but demands that any relics of historical note the PCs uncover be turned over to her for study. She is not interested in magical treasure, dragonshards,

or gemstones. She claims tablets, discs with ancient writing, tomes of lore, and the like; a conflict might ensue if the PCs want to keep a valuable relic that she deems worthy of study. Jargret is a longtime ally of the Scriveners of the Sky, an alliance of cloud giants that seeks the lost lore of the giant empire (SX 60). She offers the evidence of her findings to the order of giants in the hope of aiding them in their quest to chronicle the past ages of their people.

Pardrengo Swiftstalker: Pardrengo (N male shifter expert 3/ranger 2/extreme explorer 2) is a gruff individual who grates on everyone, but he is one of the most skilled freelance guides in Stormreach. Pardrengo was born in a small shifter community established on the outskirts of Stormreach over fifty years ago (since disbanded). He is in love with Xen'drik. He sees the land's savage heart as the perfect place for his people to embrace their wild instincts. The shifter knows the continent better than most, but presses those he guides to near exhaustion and doesn't hesitate to lead his charges into perilous environs. Pardrengo either forgets that not everyone is as in touch with Xen'drik's ferocious temperament as he, or he simply disdains those who cannot endure the land's many challenges. He mocks those who are unable to brave the perils he faces daily and shows no mercy to anyone who can't keep his breakneck pace. If the characters weather his rude veneer and arrogance without complaint, the shifter leads them to wondrous locales avoided by or completely unknown to most guides. If a PC gains his respect, Pardrengo proves a stalwart ally in battle.

The Watersnake: An independent scion of House Lyrandar, Kaleena d'Lyrandar (NG female half-elf expert 2/ranger 3) guides teams and cargo upriver on the *Watersnake*, a unique elemental-bound skiff. This vessel was a personal project of Kaleena's mother, and she devoted her fortune to developing it. The soaring wood craft is powered by a Small water elemental and can carry up to 10 Medium creatures 15 miles per hour upriver against a moderately strong river current, or 25 miles per hour through still waters. The artificers built stealth magic into the raft as well; Kaleena can activate *darkness*, *obscuring mist*, or *silence*, centered on the craft, up to twice per day each (caster level 10th). The

skiff requires the Mark of Storm to activate. Kaleena has little to do with the house enclave in Stormreach and despises the current viceroy.

Solei Moonspear: Solei (CG male drow elf rogue 2) plays the part of a native drow "savage" with panache. In truth, he is a city slicker born and bred to Stormreach's urbane Cross district. Solei rarely leaves the city, and on such occasions he never strays farther than a mile into the wilds. Recently Solei's mother took ill with a bad case of cackle fever, and the young drow is desperate for money to pay for a *remove disease* spell or similar treatment for her. The young rogue dreamed up a great scam to cash in on foreigners' bigoted idea of his people as jungle-dwelling savages. Solei uses Disguise to paint himself up like a native, and Bluff to offer his services. He claims he can guide travelers safely through "my people's" jungle. Shortly after his clients pay his advance fee, he leads them out of town a short distance and disappears into the brush. Solei then beats a hasty retreat back to Stormreach, hoping to cure his mother's disease and hide from those he swindled.

WAYFINDER FOUNDATION

The cryptic and exclusive Wayfinder Foundation considers Stormreach to be one of its most important venues. This collective of explorers, scholar-adventurers, and unprincipled treasure hunters operates out of a large ruin of a temple dating back to the giants' custodianship of Stormreach. The dark, cavernous structure has been converted into a headquarters, museum, and training ground for the Foundation's Stormreach regulars as well as itinerant members who need a place to bunk down, resupply, and gather information. Foundation members affectionately call this home away from home The Nest.

A shifter named Kharva Crack-Tusk (CG female shifter ranger 3/rogue 3/extreme explorer 3) tends The Nest. Kharva was one of the first shifters to join the order, and rumor has it the old shifter was present on the very expedition during which Lord Boroman contracted his wasting blight. Other rumors whisper of Kharva's wild affair with Boroman, cut short by his debilitating illness. She has since begun a sordid

THRI-KREEN GUIDES

The thri-kreen are among the most reliable and trustworthy native guides. The mantis warriors have an uncanny ability to find a path through Xen'drik's shifting terrain, and they are also familiar with the dungeons beneath Stormreach. Obtaining their services is no mean feat, however. Visitors misunderstand their principles, lifestyle, and beliefs, and it is difficult

to gain a thri-kreen's trust. Easily insulted by foreigners, unable to comprehend mammalian behavior, and uninterested in material wealth, the thri-kreen spurn most travelers who seek their service. People do not choose a thri-kreen guide as much as the insectoid being chooses them.

relationship with a half-orc named Klintros Drovomar (N male half-orc ranger 6), who helps her run the Nest. PCs with Wayfinder connections can receive aid from Kharva and Klintros to the tune of up to 250 gp worth of mundane gear. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check also grants four vials of antitoxin, and a DC 35 check persuades Kharva to lend a PC her pair of *rock boots* (*Magic of Eberron* 119) for use on an expedition, provided they are returned. (If *Magic of Eberron* is unavailable, substitute *boots of striding and springing*).

More Wayfinders are drawn to Stormreach than to any other locale frequented by these brave explorers. Every year dozens of initiate Wayfinders and would-be explorers flock to the city. Few survive the tests that Xen'drik presents.

A good number of Wayfinders arrive in Stormreach determined to pursue the interests of historical societies of Khorvaire, or even to seek a cure for their Lord Boroman's bizarre wasting illness. Xen'drik is a tempting mistress, however, and even the organization's most idealistic and stalwart members lose their way once they reach this gateway to the dark mysteries of the savage continent. Some fledgling Wayfinders are seduced by Stormreach's wild urban life and never make it into the jungles. Whether gambling over the blood sport of the Ring, being captivated by the silken pleasures of the city's lurid brothels, or becoming addicted to one or more mind-warping narcotics, many young explorers who arrived seeking their fortunes instead wind up as drooling degenerates. Their last coin spent on their chosen vice, they turn to crime or simply end up prey of the street predators of Stormreach's urban jungle.

Other Wayfinders who arrive here plunge wildly into the enticing mysteries of Xen'drik with a dangerous zeal. Many never look back. They go native in Xen'drik's mist-laden wilds, losing interest in the Foundation's goals and seduced by the unfettered and exciting existence of the native inhabitants. Others fall in love with the wisdom and traditions of the people who refuse to bow to gold or politics. One marries a drow priestess, another becomes the sworn scorpion-brother of a chieftain, a third joins the work of the giant Scriveners of the Sky in their efforts to reclaim their lost heritage.

The wilderness of Xen'drik is vast as any ocean, and some simply drown in its feral depths. An expedition into Xen'drik is no jaunt into the Eldeen Reaches or the Shadow Marches; it is an expedition into the wild heart of savagery itself. The Traveler's Curse can cause a day trip to turn into a months-long expedition spent foraging for food and fending off beasts more terrifying than any Khorvaire holds, not to mention tribes of cannibals. Even the steadiest mind can snap out in the thick jungle. Witnessing the brutal rites of grimlocks, barbaric giants, and bloodthirsty drow tribes breaks explorers' souls, and the secrets long buried in giant ruins can drive anyone to madness.

More than a few Wayfinders go insane, some of whom were the very best and brightest of the Foundation before they lost their minds. Nevertheless, their expertise is still highly sought after by the desperate or those who wish insight into the same horrors that sundered their spirits.

Although madness grips some, the native lifestyle lures others away, and a few are drained of purpose by debauchery, most of Stormreach's Wayfinders are corrupted by something far simpler and more powerful: greed. Nothing pollutes a good heart faster than a touch of avarice. More than a few Wayfinders become corrupted when they realize just how much untold wealth lies in the ruins of Xen'drik. Guides are quick to look for more lucrative means of using their skills. Why collect a meager fee to take a bunch of soft city slickers out to the ruins to find some secret treasure, when you could slit their throats while they sleep and claim the riches yourself?

TAXES AND LETTERS OF MARQUE

At the end of the Last War, the king of Breland began issuing letters of marque granting adventurers permission to explore and plunder the ruins of Xen'drik. (The concept was adapted from wartime letters of marque, which granted independent agents permission to attack ships and assets belonging to other nations.) For a one-time fee of 500 gp, adventurers can then freely sell their acquired items on the open markets in Breland.

Taking their cue from the Brelish, the lords of Stormreach have instituted a similar system. For 500 gp, you can purchase a Stormreach letter of marque, which allows you to sell all relics and items at market value in the city for one year from date of issuance. Without such a letter, the Storm Lords officially charge a 40% tax on all transactions within city limits. So, for example, if you would normally be able to sell an item at a market value of 1,000 gp, you would instead get 600 gp, with the merchant collecting the Stormreach value tax for the Storm Lords.

It's widely understood, however, that this policy is not strictly applied. The Storm Lords have long-standing "arrangements" with the dragonmarked houses, academic institutions such as Morgrave University, and operations such as the Blackwheel Company. Relics gleaned from sponsored expeditions are not taxed in any traditional way, but processed through a Byzantine system of kickbacks, bribes, and payoffs.

FINDING A FENCE

If you wish to avoid official channels, taxes, and letters of marque, you can take advantage of Stormreach's thriving Night Tide black market (page 74). Finding an appropriate fence for the item you're

selling requires a successful Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check. The DC is 15 + 1 for every increment of 1,000 gp in the base market price of the item. (For instance, fencing an item that has a base market price of 10,000 gp would require a DC 25 check.) Dealing with fences has its risks, however. The Hollow Shards (page 114) run elaborate swindles in the city's black market venues, and the Bilge Rats are always looking to muscle tribute out of anyone exchanging coin on their turf.

LORDS OF THE HUNT

The Tusk and Talon Lodge, a nondescript building facing Coldwake Pond in Respite, is the den of a small but tight-knit cabal of some of Xen'drik's most deadly hunters. Big game and trophy hunters flock to Xen'drik. Their butchery of the natural fauna is abhorred by druids and native peoples of the continent, who see them as little more than opportunistic glory hounds who slaughter beasts for a small trophy and leave the rest of their kill to rot. Expeditions of drunken Five Nations nobles or gold-grubbing mercenary hunters-for-hire leave fields of wasted carrion in their wake and earn the ire of local tribes who rely on herds for food, and on rarer animals for spiritual purposes.

The Lords of the Hunt are not common hunters. They have no interest in depopulating the dream serpents or driving speckled dire wolves to extinction for profit. These master slayers seek only the most fearsome and dangerous prey: monsters that tower over the treetops, old rogue dragons ensconced in their lairs, and sanity-shattering formless terrors lurking in the darkest reaches of the jungles. Lords of the Hunt seek only monsters of legend that terrorize the local tribes as well as encroaching Stormreacher explorers.

At the Tusk and Talon Lodge, the Lords of the Hunt swap stories, show off their kills, and sharpen their weapons. The greatest hunters in Xen'drik gather here, and nonmembers of the Lords are not granted admittance lightly. PCs who wish to petition for membership must prove their worth. Alignment means little to the Lords, who judge candidates for membership on their skills, their kills, and their zeal for the hunt. Every Lord lives for the Hunt and little else. Outside interests, whether religious, political, or business-related, that overshadow any hunter's commitment to the constant search for ferocious specimens might earn excommunication from the Lords. Rumors suggest that an ancient shrine to Banor the Bloody Spear rests beneath the Tusk and Talon Lodge, and that the Lords hold secret services on the eve of hunts and offer up trophies to their dark lord upon their return. The Lords dismiss this as nothing more than inane conjecture.

The Lords include a bevy of bored nobles who hunt dangerous creatures for sport or to chase away

ennui, or for some ridiculous sense of status among their rich peers. A number of the Lords are thrill junkies who only feel alive when they are facing down a 50-foot monstrosity. Some, though, are devoted monster-hunters who kill in revenge for the massacre of their family or village by a rampaging beast, or some other similarly traumatic event.

Vanson ir'Lain: Lord Darro's favorite uncle, this elderly Aundarian noble (NE male half-elf aristocrat 3/ranger 5) has called Stormreach home for nearly a hundred years. The half-elf was born to a Lain baron of Aundair and his elf mistress in the Eldeen Reaches when the region was still under Aundairian control, and at the height of paranoia during the purge of lycanthropes. Vanson killed his first shifter at the tender age of twelve and hunted them with his father for decades (long after the purge was called to a halt). After he murdered a family of shifters in the summer of 960 YK, two years after the Eldeen Reaches declared independence, the Aundairan crown exiled Vanson to Stormreach to deflect an international scandal and avoid rekindling the skirmishes along their new-formed border with the Reaches. Vanson claims to have recanted his murderous racism, and if confronted with his crimes he blithely dismisses them, saying that he "was born in different times." Though he now hunts far more fearsome prey than defenseless communities of shifters, rumor holds that he still keeps an extensive collection of shrunken shifter heads—grisly trophies collected in his "misspent and wild youth." Vanson is a tall half-elf with distinguished silver hair and an ugly claw scar on the right side of his neck. (He claims it was a "monster," but the size and shape of it makes it seem to be a razorclaw shifter's leavings.) Though Vanson appears aged, he is remarkably spry and a hawk-eyed marksman with a longbow.

Ereg: Mostly retired now, Ereg (NE male human expert 5/ranger 3) sponsors younger hunters seeking entrance into the Lords, supposedly in hope of bolstering the organization's honored membership. His true intentions are more sinister. Bored with hunting mere animals and creatures, he now seeks cunning humanoid foes to hunt at his leisure. He takes up-and-coming hunters out on expeditions, only to stalk and kill them. The hunter became obsessed with necromantic arts after discovering an old tome devoted to blood rites during an excursion in Xen'drik, and now he enjoys animating his dead enemies to serve him. He keeps a grim cave of his undead trophies in a mazelike area of canyons over a hundred miles from the city. He often visits the canyons, claiming the dry air there does wonders for his constitution. Vanson joins Ereg on a few of his special hunts when the prey includes one or more shifters. The two keep their expeditions secret, since exposure would no doubt cause their expulsion from the Lords. For more information on Ereg, see *Secrets of Xen'drik* 19.

LEGENDARY MONSTERS

The wilds of Xen'drik teem with danger. Gibbering grimlocks, savage drow, hulking giants, and all manner of beasts infest the continent's jungles, wetlands, and mountain heights. But even among these dangers, a few individual monsters' predations draw considerable attention. Time and again, these menaces slaughter explorers, adventurers, and even the shrewdest and most mighty members of the Lords of the Hunt.

Tales of expedition survivors have made these monstrosities living legends. Lords of the Hunt idle away nights discussing strategies to hunt down these evils, or swapping stories of their sightings over the dying embers of a campfire. Anyone who brings back one of these legends as trophies is guaranteed the respect and awe of the Lords of the Hunt.

MULRAARGO, THE TAR-SKINNED TROLL

Deep in the soggy fens and stinking bogs of Xen'drik lurks a thing as silent as shadow, whose form shifts from a towering, taloned fury to a slinking, putrescent sludge of black oil. Mulraargo appears as a troll with oil-slick black skin sporting boils and sores that weep a vicious sludge at all times. More than a few reports claim that the monstrous troll can melt away into a puddle of black ooze. This would account for the troll's unrivaled skill at stealth and ambush and explain why no hunter can track the creature. Mulraargo enjoys picking off members of an expedition one at a time, savoring the mounting fear among the survivors almost as much he does the flesh of their captured companions.

MULRAARGO

Male troll rogue 5/ranger 2

CE Large giant

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +10, **Spot** +8

Languages Common, Giant

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14; **uncanny dodge**

hp 157 (13 HD); **regeneration** 5

Immune acid

Fort +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 claws +15 each (1d6+7 plus 1d6 acid) and bite +13 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 acid)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Atk Options engulf, favored enemy humans +2, Multiattack, Power Attack, rend 2d6+10, sneak attack +3d6, Two-Weapon Fighting

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20

Abilities Str 25, Dex 19, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 6

CR 12

SQ sludge form, trapfinding, trap sense +1, wild empathy

Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Climb +8, Hide +8 (+18 in sludge form), Jump +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Spot +8, Survival +5, Swim +20, Tumble +14

Engulf (Ex) Mulraargo can pull one Medium or smaller creature into his oily, sludgelike body after making a successful grapple check against it. A trapped creature takes 2d6 points of acid damage per round and must make a DC 20 Fortitude save each round or begin drowning as Mulraargo forces his toxic sludge down its throat. Every round, the trapped creature can make an opposed grapple check to escape. Mulraargo can hold only one creature inside him at any one time.

Sludge Form (Su) Mulraargo is tainted with foul magical pollution. He can melt into a pool of black sludge as a move action at will and creep through bogs below the surface of the fetid water. In this form, he can seep into small openings just as any oily substance could. The troll can reconstitute his form as a move action.

Skills Mulraargo has a +10 racial bonus on Swim checks and can always take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He also gains a +10 bonus on Hide checks in boggy areas when in sludge form.



Mulraargo strikes without warning



The unwary find death in Two-Maws' two maws

OLD SILVERCLAWS

The jungle is awash with sound. An orchestra of birds, the chatter of chimps, and the drone of a million insects blend into a cacophonous roar. Suddenly a shrieking howl tears through the din, and the jungle sound goes dead. Silence reigns for a time in deference to Old Silverclaws, lord of the burning jungle. A tremendous girallon, by some reports towering up to 20 feet in height, Silverclaws has prowled the jungles for as long as the oldest Stormreach residents can remember. His shining silver-white fur accents his black face and enormous hands. The beast's otherwise impressive coat is marred with thousands of scars, a legacy of the countless battles fought over his years as the king of Xen'drik's wilds. He lost an arm five years ago to a fire giant's axe, but he makes up for the maiming injury with an even greater level of cantankerous ferocity. His approach can be heard a mile off, the sound of splintering trees and his rumbling snarl heralding his coming.

OLD SILVERCLAWS

Male advanced elite girallon

N Huge magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +2, Spot +18

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 16

CR 12

hp 199 (19 HD)

Fort +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), climb 40 ft.

Melee 4 claws +31 each (1d8+13) and bite +29 (2d6+6)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, rend 2d8+19

Base Atk +19; **Grp** +40

Abilities Str 36, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 8

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +14, Move Silently +8, Spot +18

Terrifying Howl (Ex) As a free action once per encounter, Old Silverclaws can let everyone within a half mile know he is lord of Xen'drik's jungles by unleashing a deafening roar. Those hearing this are shaken for the remainder of the day (until they rest) unless they succeed on a DC 24 Will save.

LURKING TWO-MAWS

This nightmare monster is a hulking tyrannosaur whose awe-inspiring girth could not be contained in the Livewood Theater. Despite that, Two-Maws' most terrifying attribute isn't her size—it's the yawning circle of bristling fangs at the center of her chest, which is surrounded by a morass of grasping tentacles. Survivors of her attacks testify that she can scoop up a dozen men at a time, stuffing one after the other into her razored chest-maw.

LURKING TWO-MAWS

CR 16

Female advanced mutated tyrannosaur

N Gargantuan animal

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +26, Spot +26

AC 31, touch 9, flat-footed 24

hp 525 (42 HD)

Fort +31, **Ref** +26, **Will** +17

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee bite +45 (4d6+21) and

6 tentacles +45 each (3d8+14)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (30 ft. with tentacles)

Atk Options improved grab, Improved Multiattack, Power Attack, swallow whole

Base Atk +31; **Grp** +57

Abilities Str 38, Dex 16, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 10

Feats Improved Multiattack, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Improved Natural Armor (9), Multiattack, Power Attack, Track

Skills Listen +26, Spot +26

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Lurking Two-Maws must hit an opponent with a bite or tentacle attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Swallow Whole (Ex) Lurking Two-Maws can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Large size or smaller by making a grapple check. A swallowed creature takes

3d6+14 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round. It can cut its way out by using a light slashing piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once a creature exits, muscular action closes the hole and another creature must cut its own way out. Each of her two gizzards can hold 2 Large, 4 Medium, 16 Small, 64 Tiny, or 256 Diminutive creatures.

GLIMMERDOOM

A quick glint of refracted light, gone in the blink of an eye, might be the only warning before a skin-searing blast of lightning obliterates the unfortunate target of Glimmerdoom's wrath. This mutated behir stalks ancient ruins, subterranean tunnels, and canopied rocky mesas. The creature's mirrorlike hide bends light around its massive powerhouse frame, allowing it to mask its presence or distort and refract its image at will. Glimmerdoom is nowhere and everywhere, a deadly mirage bristling with electricity and hungry for scorched flesh. Worse yet for those who would challenge it, the mirror-plated behir reflects magic as easily as it does light, and spells hurled at it turn back on the caster more often than not.

GLIMMERDOOM

CR 12

Male mutated advanced behir
NE Huge magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 19

hp 158 (12 HD)

Immune electricity

SR 23; reflective spell resistance

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 15 ft.

Melee bite +18 (3d6+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Atk Options breath weapon, Cleave, constrict 2d8+8, improved grab, Power Attack, rake, swallow whole

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will—*invisibility*

3/day—*displacement*, *mirror image*

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28

Abilities Str 26, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 1

SQ can't be tripped

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Track

Skills Intimidate +13, Listen +10, Spot +10

Reflective Spell Resistance (Su) Spells cast at Glimmerdoom that fail to overcome his spell resistance are reflected back at the caster as per a *spell turning* effect.

Breath Weapon (Su) 20-foot line, once every 10 rounds, damage 7d6 electricity, Reflex DC 22 half.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Glimmerdoom must hit an opponent with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple

check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to constrict the opponent or swallow the opponent in the following round.

Rake (Ex) Six claws, attack bonus +18, melee damage 1d4+4.

Swallow Whole (Ex) Glimmerdoom can try to swallow a grabbed Medium or smaller opponent by making a successful grapple check. A swallowed creature takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the behir's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15).

THE CINDER SISTERS

Somewhere in the deep interior of Xen'drik, where even the drow refuse to tread, lies a tremendous stretch of blasted boughs and burnt-black trees. The Cinder Sisters prowl this wasteland and vie for the boiled blood of anyone foolish enough to trespass. The heads of this half-fiend hydra bicker constantly, although whether they possess individual intelligence or the demonic monstrosity is merely mad, no one knows. A few junior members of the Lords of the Hunt have succeeded in bringing back one or more of the Sisters' heads, claiming to have slain the beast, but the veterans in the organization know this is foolish presumption.

THE CINDER SISTERS

CR 16

Female half-fiendish twelve-headed elite pyrohydra

CE Huge magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +17, Spot +17

Languages Common, Infernal

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 22

hp 150 (12 HD); fast healing 22; 5 points of cold damage prevents head from regrowing

Immune poison, fire; **SR** 22

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10; **DR** 10/magic

Fort +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 10 ft. (average), swim 20 ft.

Melee 12 bites +21 each (3d8+10) and

2 claws +18 each (1d8+10)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Atk Options Blind-Fight, breath weapon, Combat Reflexes, smite good 1/day (+12 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):

3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 13)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 16), *contagion* (DC 12), *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 13)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +30

Abilities Str 31, Dex 20, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Intimidate +4, Listen +17, Spot +17, Sense Motive +7, Survival +7, Swim +33

Breath Weapon (Su) 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, 20 feet long, each head once every 1d4 rounds, damage 3d6 fire, Reflex DC 23 half.



"You're doomed," the malenti cried. "And once I devour you, I shall consume this city!"

PARRILLO

CHAPTER FIVE

URBAN ADVENTURES

Adventure abounds in Stormreach. Shadowed ruins wait below the streets. Unhallowed shrines to long-forgotten gods beckon adventurers to their doom. Imprisoned giant kings and fiendish masterminds strain their magical bonds, thirsting for the chance to wreak carnage on innocents.

Bloodthirsty criminals seek fresh prey. Dragon-marked houses scheme against each other, their shadow wars raging unheeded by most denizens of Stormreach. The Storm Lords plot each other's downfall, struggling for supremacy over the city's lucrative enterprises. Pirates, con artists, and sellswords lurk in taverns. Monsters hide in shaded alleys, and ghouls prowl the ruined basements of great warehouses. The chaos, dust, and blood of the gladiatorial Red Ring offer a life of unmitigated violence, where those who make their living within must kill or be killed.

Giants, drow, and monsters menace the city from the south. Kraken overlords and aboleths incorporate the city into their alien plans.

Stormreach is steeped in peril. The city needs heroes to fend off the many horrors within and without.

SEEDS FOR ADVENTURE

You, as the DM, can use the adventure hooks, NPCs, special rules, and plot lines in this chapter as you see fit. Many of the adventure seeds are simple drop-in plot lines and NPCs; others offer a more detailed approach to campaign building options. You can mix several of these options to your liking to weave an entire campaign set against the dangerous backdrop of Stormreach.

This book offers enough options to set an entire campaign in the city proper, with excursions to its hinterlands. However, your players might not wish to spend their entire adventuring careers in Stormreach, especially with the wilds of Xen'drik so close, and the Thunder Sea beckoning them to travel to distant shores.

Stormreach serves as a fitting home base for adventurers. Here they can fence loot at the Night

Tide, hide from their enemies in the city's mazelike ruins, and disappear among its shady characters. It is also the ideal place to spend hard-earned gold and enjoy pleasures unattainable in other cities. If the PCs leave Stormreach and return repeatedly, you might weave plot lines that build episodically with each visit to the city. You can also simply snag an adventure seed to toss the players' way in a pinch, as a change of pace, or to add more urban flavor to a game session.

If your players are interested in a long-term campaign set in the city, Stormreach is a place where an adventurer can pursue a multitude of paths. PCs might join the Stormreach Guard, open their own inquisitive offices, get mixed up in the brutal struggle for the city's underworld, or start their own gang to contend with the Bilge Rats, Shrouds, Titans, or Golden Lions. Your players might prefer to play a campaign based entirely around the slaughter of the Red Ring, and even start their own stable to compete for dominance of the Blood Council. The players might take the roles of scions of one or more dragon-marked houses, embroiling themselves in the treacherous waters of interhouse politics. These options can be combined to create a vivid and exciting urban campaign set in Stormreach.

A VARIETY OF VENUES

Stormreach offers many types of locations in which to set adventures. If you plan to create your own adventure scenarios, here's a short discussion of the various environments in and around the city that lend themselves to use as adventure sites.

The Undercity

Stormreach's ruins reach miles into the earth. Sewer tunnels filled with vermin, discarded murder victims risen from the dead, prowling carrion crawlers, and moaning cloaklers crisscross below the city's streets. These dark mazes are home to thri-kreen tribes, kobold clans, and other creatures of darkness that do not suffer trespass lightly.

Any of these sewers might suddenly open into a yawning lost city, a shattered remnant of a bygone



civilization of giants, drow, or any other of the races that called the ruins home ages ago. Traps and treasures dot these ruins, and monstrosities replace the original inhabitants. Only vestiges of these ancient civilizations survived whatever cataclysm claimed them. The twisted mockeries of their former inhabitants gibber and cavort in the lightless reaches of their people's ruins, worshiping broken idols and gods who long ago turned their backs on them.

Necropolises teeming with the dead riddle the subterranean levels as well. Their decaying residents are restless, ever on the lookout for trespassers to feed their eternal hunger. Other more sinister powers use interlopers as pawns in some foul scheme to retake the city's surface.

Finally, there remain potent magical prisons dating back to the age of the titan kings, buried below the buzzing streets of the city. Any number of terrors could be bound in these depths: a vampire lord of the Qabalin elves, a titan king who sought to ascend to godhood, or a giant wizard trapped with the fiends he summoned to do his bidding. These horrors and more await brave heroes in the dark below the city.

Mean Streets

Stormreach's streets are tougher than most cities' streets. Sharn has its share of crime, but the open displays of brutality witnessed daily by Stormreachers make the City of Towers appear to be the pinnacle of civilization by comparison.

Survival of the fittest is the only real law the city respects. The PCs could easily become the target of criminals or be swept up into the constant turmoil of gang warfare that grips the streets of Stormreach.

In addition, do-gooders quickly make powerful enemies in this city of vice. PCs who rock the boat by cracking criminals' heads quickly come to the attention of dangerous forces, such as the Bilge Rats, the Quickfoot Gang, and Storm Lord Kirris Sel Shadrax, the shadowy boss of the city's underworld.

Crime festers in the narrow, dark alleys, without even a single shaft of cleansing light to scour it away. Cavernous warehouses along the piers serve as meeting grounds for various shady parties conducting illicit affairs. The Night Tide brings pirates and smugglers to the dank, light-starved Underharbor. The piers above are the prowling ground of the wererat Bilge Rats gang, whose diseased members feed on anyone foolish enough to show their face without proper tribute of gold or goods.

Ruined Cityscape

The unique architecture of the city offers you the perfect landscape for heart-pounding battles and chase scenes. An adventurer can race across the tops of ramshackle walls as they crumble beneath his weight, leap from a chunk of floating rubble to a broken pillar-top while dodging a barrage of crossbow bolts, or muscle hand over hand through deteriorating rigging as a crime lord's trained wyvern menaces him from above.

Beneath the Waves

Some heroes look inland toward the jungles and mountains for adventure. Others gaze toward the mysterious Thunder Sea. Below its sparkling surface lies a fleet of sunken pirate ships, their holds brimming with titan's gold—and the remains of their crews. Forests of kelp hide malenti and their shark-like kin. The kelp forest also shrouds their ancient temples to the Devourer, in which the malenti hold nightly feasts of blood sacrifice to appease their god. Coral fields, wonderlands of undersea light and color, hypnotize visitors. These visions of paradise are treacherous, distracting swimmers from predatory sea serpents and dragon turtles. Deep ocean rifts shade kraken overlords and cabals of alien aboleths from the sun's prying eye and lure foolish trespassers to a watery doom.

STORMREACH SCENARIOS

The remainder of this chapter is a collection of settings and situations that you can either use "out of the box" or tailor to suit the tastes of your players and the abilities of their characters.

GLORY IN THE RING

Low- to High-Level Adventure

The Red Ring is the perfect backdrop for a gladiatorial adventure or a campaign focused not only on the arena, but also the double-dealing that goes on between the stablemasters and the Blood Council. Not all the PCs need to be gladiators in order to use this scenario. The PCs might be hired by a stablemaster to help ruin their rivals in the ring. The PCs can even start their own stable, with one of them as stablemaster, one as (or more) bloodbound, and others becoming behind-the-scenes schemers and saboteurs against other stables.

HOOKS

The most obvious and direct hook has the PCs joining a stable or starting one of their own, but you

can use any of the following situations to tie PCs to the Ring.

Bookie's Angle

The gambling surrounding the Red Ring's fights yields mountains of gold for the Blood Council, as well as gangs such as the Golden Lions, and the Storm Lords. The PCs, or people they are closely connected to, end up owing a sizable gambling debt and need to figure out a way to make it right. Alternatively, the PCs are brought in by some faction to start their own stable to fix fights or otherwise influence the betting.

Stable War

The PCs are swept up in a war among feuding stables. They are most likely hired as free agents to sabotage matches and waylay or murder top-tier bloodbound belonging to other stables.

Slave Trade

Stormreach is a city founded by pirates, a city that exists outside the Code of Galifar. It is one of the few foreign markets for the slavers of Darguun. Most people find the concept of slavery distasteful, and few of the regular inhabitants of Stormreach own slaves. The majority of Stormreach's inhabitants are willing to set aside their distaste for slavery when it comes to the Red Ring. Few people worry whether the gladiators are fighting of their own free will; they come to the ring to be entertained. The only high-placed person involved with the Red Ring who truly wants slavery abolished in Stormreach is Kolos (page 102), but he is outnumbered and hated by the other stablemasters because of his views.

The PCs could enter this conflict on any side. A former slave PC might want to free others. Someone the characters know might be pressed into slavery and sold to a stable. Many of the slaves purchased from Darguun are descended from Cyrans who were taken during the conquest, and a PC could discover that a gladiator is his cousin. Enemies of Kolos could hire the PCs to foil the minotaur's maneuvers against slavery, to ruin his stable, or to slay him. (Killing Kolos is a dangerous gambit and is best done in the ring, where his death will raise no suspicions.)

RULES OF THE RING

The ring has only two rules: No poison can be used by the bloodbound, and no enchantment magic can be employed. The competing bloodbound's stables decide the rules for each specific match in advance under the purview of the Blood Council.

Many fights are one-on-one matches, but some are team matches. A bloodbound is allowed any weapons and armor his stable can provide. Sometimes a bloodbound is restricted to nonmagical or even substandard equipment for the sake of the viewers' entertainment. (The crowd loves it when

the bloodbound are released into the ring unarmed and must snatch up random weapons strewn about the ground and walls.)

Matches are fought until one bloodbound can't continue. Mercy is rarely exercised, but permitted. Kolos is the only champion of the ring who regularly spares his foes without earning the rancor of the crowd.

CHEATING

Though the punishments for cheating are severe, the activity is nonetheless common. Two ploys used by unscrupulous stablemasters are described below.

Slow Sap

Slow sap, a clear, odorless contact poison (DC 18, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str), has been used in the arena for years because of its slow-acting quality. The poison's primary damage does not take effect until 10 minutes after a would-be victim has been exposed. Poisoners in the employ of a rival stable often coat the interior of armor or a weapon's grip with slow sap.

Sabotage

Disable Device checks can be used to sabotage armor and weapons, hampering their effectiveness or even causing them to fall apart in the heat of battle. A viewer can identify a sabotaged item with close examination (Search DC 20 or 25). Use the table below to determine the DC for a particular Disable Device check.

SABOTAGE

DISABLE DEVICE DC

Simple weapon	–5
Exotic weapon	+5
Make weapon unwieldy (–2 on attack rolls)	10
Make weapon unwieldy (–4 on attack rolls)	15
Make weapon inaccurate (–2 on damage rolls)	10
Make weapon inaccurate (–4 on damage rolls)	15
Make weapon fragile (falls apart on successful hit)	20
Make weapon deadly (change nonlethal to lethal)	15
Make armor weaker (–1/4 armor bonus)	20
Make armor weaker (–1/2 armor bonus)	25
Make armor more encumbering (+2 check penalty)	15
Make armor more encumbering (+4 check penalty)	20
Make armor fragile (falls apart on enemy's miss)	25
+5 on Search DC to determine sabotage	+5

SPECIALTY MATCHES

Standard one-on-one and team battles are popular, but to keep the crowds coming week after week, the Blood Council creates all manner of exotic specialty matches.

Beast Match

A real crowd pleaser. One bloodbound enters the ring to face some horrible monstrosity that is usually at least Huge in size. Slayers and Crimson Champions

are expected to do so unarmored, and on occasion, unarmed. In a new, popular variant, two bloodbound battle each other while various monsters are released into the ring to savage them.

Last Man Standing Match

These meatgrinders always sell out, even though the admission fees are tripled to cover the massive losses the stables take. Most stables contribute several bloodbound to these free-for-all melees in which over twenty gladiators enter the ring, one walks out, and the rest get carried out.

Death Vat Battle

Bloodbound battle over tremendous vats of alchemical acid or brackish polluted brine with tentacled monsters lurking within (chuuls, giant squids, and such creatures). They must navigate a matrix of metal poles, shaky gangplanks, and hanging chains as they fight, requiring a successful DC 15 Balance or Climb check every round that they move at full speed or that they attack in combat. A foe can shake a chain or stomp on a plank to dislodge his enemy (opposed Strength check). If the attacker wins the check, the defender must make an immediate DC 20 Balance, Climb, or Jump check or fall to his doom. Opponents can sunder a plank, pole, or chain as well (hardness 10, hp 15, break DC 25), forcing a foe standing on or clinging to it to make a DC 15 Reflex save or plummet into the huge vat below.

Chain Match

In this one-on-one match, both bloodbound wear spiked rusty gauntlets on their left hands tied together by a 10-foot length of chain. The ring floor is scattered with pits of poison-coated spikes, *walls of fire*, and other hazards. Every round, each bloodbound can make a grapple check as a free action on his turn. Succeeding on the grapple check allows the bloodbound to either jerk the loser about violently, negating the foe's Dexterity bonus to AC and giving him a –2 penalty on Reflex saves for 1 round, or he can drag his foe along as he moves, taking a standard action to forcibly move the enemy 10 feet in any direction. Failing on the grapple check imposes a –2 penalty on all the bloodbound's attack rolls for the round. No rules prevent a bloodbound from sundering the chain (hardness 10, hp 15, break DC 25).

Hail of Death Match

Hail of death was the first new format developed by Malketh since ascending to his father's position. It is currently wildly popular. Spectators in the front rows of the arena can purchase overpriced crossbows and ammunition from the ring vendors. (No one can bring his own weapons to these bouts.) Spectators use these purchased crossbows to fire upon the bloodbound combatants as they fight. These matches

are huge moneymakers, both because of the crossbow fees and the sellout crowds, who love being involved in the matches.

Razor Chariot Match

In this match, pairs of dire tigers pull huge chariots about the arena. The chariots are covered in blades, and huge razored saws extend from each wheel's hub. Deneith mercenaries who are armed to the teeth ride the chariots, attacking all bloodbound in the arena. The tigers occasionally savage spectators who get too close, as well.

ENEMIES AND ALLIES

PCs involved in the Red Ring might end up at odds with or side by side with these groups.

The Blood Council

If the PCs end up as pawns of Malketh or Ralzina, serving well no doubt brings rewards in the short term. Malketh sees no one as an equal, and if the PCs do not prove adequately subservient, he tries to expunge them. Ralzina sees others only as assets (earners or souls to be culled). Kolos is an honorable

stablemaster, and if the PCs prove themselves worthy, he makes a powerful ally.

Dhavordrin of Dragon's Heart

This aged elf stablemaster, an exile from Aerenal, is from an older day when free bloodbound were as numerous as slaves in the Red Ring and his stable was strong. Now he has only fifteen bloodbound, but they are all well seasoned fighters. He feels he is too old to stand against Malketh and is waiting to be swept aside by the passage of time, but if roused to action by the PCs, he can prove a valuable ally to them and Kolos.

EVENTS

Aside from matches, behind-the-scenes meetings, and much-anticipated championship title bouts, these events could unfold in an adventure set around the Red Ring.

Feast of Blood

At the outset of the Annual Games and its preceding special championship matches, the Blood Council hosts a giant feast in the arena. Hundreds of stable



Gladiators find glory or death in the ring

workers, masters, bloodbound, and the invited elite of Stormreach gorge themselves on delicacies and wine on the sandy floor of the ring. These feasts are gala affairs with no expense spared. Singers, acrobats, and displays of strength and martial skill by bloodbound delight the guests. These feasts are important to anyone connected to the Red Ring. One of these events provides the perfect opportunity to bend the Blood Council's ear and beseech its members' aid in arranging bouts. A feast of blood is also an ideal occasion to make allies and enemies in arena politics, not to mention a chance to slip poison into a bloodbound's goblet. Interested parties can also garner blackmail evidence for a philandering stablemaster, Storm Lord, or other highly placed dignitary who lets his scruples fall by the wayside.

Annual Games

These yearly exhibition championships are the only chance a nonbloodbound has to enter the arena and feel the thundering roar of the crowd. Many entrants are adventurers seeking the glory of the ring or more experience in heated battle. Others are hopefuls looking for entrance to a stable. A large number of them are nothing more than deluded spectators tired of being on the outside looking in. Competing in the games is a chance to settle a score with an enemy who might be otherwise untouchable outside the arena. Joining the games also allows PCs to impress an important person of the city (Storm Lord, dragonmarked scion, or other official) who might be a huge fan of the ring. By winning in the games, the PCs might gain a powerful sponsor who can supply the party with information, items, or other aid.

Slave Auctions

Every month, slave ships arrive in Stormreach from Darguun, laden with living cargo packed like beasts in 4-foot-square pens, underfed and dirty. The slaves are marched to the Red Ring to be bought by interested stablemasters. These auctions are a gathering of the elite of the ring. Handlers, stablemasters, slaver kingpins, and other interested parties attend and vie for the hardiest among the new stock. PCs might persuade rival stables' handlers to refrain from bidding on choice slaves, or they might gather intelligence to aid Kolos's abolitionist movement. They might even lean on the slavers or try to start a revolt.

After the auction is concluded, the unwanted who are not purchased are not returned to the ships. Instead, they become the stars of a special event called the Slaughter. This event is simple in format and can be viewed by invitation only. The unwanted slaves are left in the ring while a few seasoned bloodbound are released into the arena to butcher them. Anyone suspected of lacking fealty to his stable and the blood sport in general might be forced to take part in the Slaughter to prove his devotion.

COMPLICATIONS

Any of the following difficulties might plague the PCs at any time.

Traitor in the Ranks

Someone in the PCs' stable is actually secretly working for the stable's rivals. The traitor might report the PCs' strategies and plans to the rivals, sabotage their equipment, poison them, or even turn on them in the ring during a particularly chaotic match (such as a last man standing match).

Deadly Marksman

A rival stable hires a particularly lethal assassin to view a hail of death match and target the PCs.

Bloodbound Enmity

Another bloodbound of higher standing nurses a grudge due to some action taken by the PCs (or perhaps due to some slander spread by their rivals). This bloodbound does his best to humiliate the PCs and might challenge one or more of them to a match.

Blood Council Blacklist

Malketh or Ralzina decides to give the PCs a particularly hard time, forcing them to fight bouts under dismally disadvantageous circumstances or refusing to grant them shots against higher-ranking bloodbound.

Outside Influence

A crime syndicate or corrupt member of the Guard or a militia leans hard on a PC or one of his bloodbound allies, roughing up that person and promising worse unless he takes a fall in his next match so that certain interested parties can cash in on a high-stakes gamble.

GLADIATORS OF THE RING

If you have access to *Secrets of Xen'drik*, the creatures and NPCs in chapter 3 of that book could be faced in the arena. Most monsters from the *Monster Manual* make good candidates as well. One of the legendary monsters described beginning on page 133 of this book might even be dragged back to the ring to fight the party. Here are a few more sample opponents for the Red Ring.

Steel Maw

Steel Maw is an ogre who was captured near Dar Qat and sold into slavery. He is a new addition to the Sin Spear stable. His cruel stablemaster, a woman named Shalstri Griteye, had a giant steel mask with a razored maw riveted to the ogre's skull. The poor beast is force-fed a mind-shredding narcotic called wrathweed. He no longer retains any sense of self beyond the fury that incites him in the ring.

STEEL MAW

NE Large giant

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2**Language** Giant**AC** 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16**hp** 35 (4 HD)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** mwk greatsword +9 (2d6+7/19–20) and bite +4 (1d8+4)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +12**Abilities** Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)**Skills** Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2**Possessions** hide armor, masterwork greatsword**CR 3****Skills** Climb +10, Heal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +9, Listen +6, Ride +8, Spot +8**Possessions** two +1 *short swords*, mithral shirt, four masterwork daggers, black displacer beast hide cloak, bronzed skull shoulder guards**Old Varkaar of the Splintered Shield**

Varkaar is the Shield's mightiest bloodbound, a long-time gladiator with plenty of kills on his record. He lost his right eye a few weeks back during a hail of death match, and the manticore now loathes no match more than this type of bout. He takes a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and AC if forced to fight in a hail of death match again.

OLD VARKAAR**CR 8**

N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +5, Spot +9**Language** Common**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15**hp** 142 (15 HD)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (clumsy)**Melee** 2 claws +20 each (2d4+6) and bite +18 (1d8+3)**Ranged** 6 spikes +18 each (2d6+3/17–20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +15; **Grp** +24**Atk Options** Flyby Attack**Abilities** Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 9**Feats** Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (spikes), Improved Natural Attack (spikes), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (spikes), Track**Skills** Listen +5, Spot +14, Survival +5**Possessions** *amulet of mighty fists* +1

Spikes (Ex) With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

Skills Manticores have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.**Drenga Sandspur of the Storm's Fury**

Drenga was only a boy at the time when his tribe was slaughtered by a band of explorers. He was sold to Malketh immediately, who turned the young drow over to his taskmasters and handlers. Drenga was molded into a mindless killer who remembers little of his family. He sees Malketh as his "father" now, the only one who gives his life purpose. Drenga lives only to fight in the ring.

DRENGA SANDSPUR**CR 7**

Male drow ranger 2/fighter 4

LE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +8**Languages** Common, Elven, Undercommon**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Dodge, Two Weapon Defense**hp** 40 (6 HD)**SR** 17**Weakness** light blindness**Fort** +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4 (+6 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantments**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** +1 *short sword* +8/+3 (1d6+3) and +1 *short sword* +8 (1d6+2)**Ranged** mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4+2)**Atk Options** Two-Weapon Fighting, favored enemy humans +2**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th):1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire***Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +8**Abilities** Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12**SQ** wild empathy**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Focus (short sword)**CONCLUSION**

Any adventure in the ring best reaches its grand finale with a climax out of the ring in a behind-the-scenes high-tension showdown, and on the sandy floor of the arena in a blood-soaked match between bloodbound PCs and their nemeses. If the PCs are victorious, they end up earning their freedom, winning the hearts of Stormreach's viewing elite, or even garnering a controlling seat on the Blood Council.

RESENTFUL DEAD

Mid- to High-Level Adventure

OPENING

Jolan Tankran, a Karrnathi war criminal who pushed his experiments with the undead too far during the Last War, is hiding out with sympathizers in Grindstone. Despite his best efforts to avoid them, some of those seeking restitution for his deeds have discovered his hiding place and—not wanting to tip their hand—sent a single agent into the city to find assistance in bringing him to justice.

The PCs are chosen as the instrument of revenge for the wronged parties and offered a lot of gold to set things right for them. In addition, the characters are briefed with information about all of Jolan's crimes, experiments, and powers.

The Emerald Claw and sympathizers among the Karrn community of Stormreach are sheltering Jolan. In addition, the nature of the overall community in Grindstone—where citizens watch each other's backs—makes bringing Jolan to justice a task far more difficult than either the characters or their sponsors have anticipated.

TWISTS AND TURNS

Some or all of the following statements might be true.

- The PCs' sponsors are not wronged families seeking revenge for their fallen brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters. They are the victims themselves. Jolan's experiments with the undead sometimes went awry and these intelligent zombies (use mummies with full human intelligence) have enough intelligence and capability to seek revenge themselves.

- Jolan hasn't stopped his experiments while in exile. His research has borne new fruit. His home, a plain-looking house in the heart of Grindstone, descends into a series of labyrinthine basements that he has filled with his various undead experiments.
- Jolan has made himself undead (use a mummy with his character levels applied to him and with full human intelligence). This new wrinkle was not mentioned in the reports about him and makes facing him a more dire prospect than was originally envisioned.

JOLAN TANKRAN

Jolan (NE male human necromancer 7) is egotistical, vain, and in love with the idea of his own genius. He cannot come to terms with his status as a war criminal and finds the idea of laying low anathema. As far as he is concerned, he can improve on his work only by displaying his genius to the world.

Jolan's crowning achievement is a spell that enables the creation of an infectious zombie: a creature that can spread a disease to those it harms (see the sidebar). He has succeeded, and the PCs' sponsors want him found and brought to their custody to so they can use this weapon of war for themselves. He has already created a number of host zombies and, if he is threatened, he releases them. If any of them escape, Stormreach could become a very dangerous place.

CONCLUSION

If the characters face Jolan in his den and either capture or kill him, their sponsors are suitably impressed. Stormreach is a place where criminals from all sides in the Last War have come to hide. The characters might be able to parlay this success into a job as bounty hunters. They can track war criminals

ANIMATE INFECTIOUS ZOMBIE

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Targets: One corpse touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions as *animate dead* except as noted here. It raises a zombie (not a skeleton) that carries a disease in its natural weapons. Apart from the carried infection, infectious zombies are no different from their normal counterparts.

Anyone damaged by an infectious zombie's natural weapon must make a successful DC 16 Fortitude saving throw to avoid contracting the disease, known as zombie plague (see below).

Only the initially created infectious zombie is under the caster's control. Other infectious zombies that are created by succumbing to the disease of the first zombie are uncontrolled unless other spells are put in place to control them.

Zombie Plague: The disease carried by an infectious zombie has an incubation period of 24 hours. After that time, a victim who failed its Fortitude save loses 1d6 points of Constitution. An additional save must be attempted every day thereafter until the victim either succeeds, negating the plague, or dies, rising as an infectious zombie.

hiding in Stormreach and kill or capture them for return to Khorvaire.

Jolan's notes fetch a pretty penny from experimenters in the necromantic arts, divine or arcane, though their sale opens a Pandora's box. Jolan's experiments were devoted to finding ways of raising more intelligent and more self-sustaining undead than prior methods allowed. In the wrong hands, such knowledge, even with his limited and unpredictable successes, could tip the balance of power in the city. The notes and the knowledge that the characters might have gained become a hot commodity not only in Stormreach's intrigues, but also in political machinations across the world.

Finally, Killing Jolan is not as complete an end to things as some might have hoped. After his death, either in Stormreach or after he is executed in Khorvaire, he rises again as one of the undead. Those who hunted him become the hunted themselves. His new necromantic powers increase his previous abilities with the undead, and he and his new experiments seek revenge upon both Stormreach and the characters.

CROSS KOBOLDS

Low- to Mid-Level Adventure

OPENING

Cross is an important center in Stormreach. It is adjacent to the Marketplace, and it links many of the important districts of the city. It has also become a fiercely defended home away from home for many displaced refugees from Cyre. Dannel's Pride is the Cyran ward, and its residents have invested everything they have left into preserving a little piece of the old country here in Stormreach. Anything that threatens that effort is likely to attract their opposition and raise their ire.

Now, the tenuous peace of the area is threatened. A plague of petty thefts, emptied food stores, missing pets, and pilfered strongboxes have led the people of Dannel's Pride to one conclusion: kobolds. This conclusion was confirmed by the deaths of some of the pests. (Most inhabitants view them as a larger and more annoying form of rat.) The thefts and problems continued unabated after the first few kobold killings, and in fact, they seem to be escalating.

Determined to put a stop to the damage and the desecration of their efforts to preserve what remains of their home, the people of Dannel's Pride sent their militia out to patrol the streets at night. They also pooled enough money to hire some additional help to deal with the problem. The trouble is, apart from a few small entry tunnels into their cellars and pantries, they have no real clue where the kobolds are hiding and nesting. Some investigation coupled with some tunnel crawling would seem to be in order.

TWISTS AND TURNS

Only one of the following pieces of information is true.

- The kobolds are not as stupid as the people of Dannel's Pride assume. Their leader is actually rather intelligent and regards his tribe as a sneaky, hidden gang. The trouble he is causing for Dannel's Pride, and by extension the additional work for the area gangs and militia, is at the behest of the Bilge Rats, who are seeking to undermine the Storm Hammers so that the Bilge Rats can more easily deal with their other enemies.
- The kobolds are being dominated and controlled by an unliving force from out of the Mournland, an avatar of despair and self-destruction that has been drawn to Stormreach to put an end to the Cyre enclave in Dannel's Pride. It is acting through the kobolds to undermine and demoralize the settlement before it moves directly or acts through stronger servants. Use a wraith or a dread wraith to represent this spirit.
- The kobolds don't exist. Those claiming to have killed some kobolds are lying. Instead, Cadroc (page 30) and his group of young adventurers have been stepping up their dungeon games by plundering people's "treasure rooms." Cadroc and his group store everything that has been stolen beneath the Rubble Warren. Cadroc's group members are sworn to secrecy, because they know just how much trouble they will get in if they are found out. If this carries on too long, though, a child might get hurt.
- Cadroc met the kobolds beneath the Rubble Warren, and the kobold tribe and the children's adventuring group have formed an unlikely play group. The kobolds asked the children to keep their special secret, but the children let slip choice information about their parents' houses and businesses that the kobolds later used to their advantage.

SMALL TUNNELS

The crawlspaces and tunnels beneath the Rubble Warren and throughout much of Dannel's Pride are only large enough for children and Small creatures such as kobolds and halflings. Larger folk seeking to enter the tunnels, let alone fight in them, find themselves cramped and subject to a -2 or -4 penalty to all their actions, depending on how cramped the conditions are. Small or smaller characters and creatures are unaffected.

Cadroc's "adventuring" group has explored the tunnels and crawlspaces beneath Dannel's Pride and decorated the tunnels with colorful chalk drawings of monsters and heroes. They also constructed "traps" for make-believe adventures in the tunnels. All of this can make exploration down here unusual for adventuring parties, and Cadroc and his friends could make very good guides for uncovering the kobolds.

UNUSUAL TREASURE

Although kobolds find glittery, shiny things irresistible, the items they have looted from Dannel's Pride are likely to be mundane. Upon breaking open a locked chest in the kobold warren, one is as likely to find a particularly tasty glazed ham as a fistful of treasure. When generating treasure within the kobold tunnels, roll on the following table.

1d6 Result

- 1–3 The treasure is a jumble of mundane items such as pots and pans.
- 4–5 The treasure is made up of tasty food items stolen from a pantry.
- 6 Determine treasure normally.

CONCLUSION

With the kobolds confronted, their true master (if one exists) is revealed (and perhaps destroyed), and their intent is made clearer. The characters earn the gratitude of Dannel's Pride and, by extension, a warm reception from other refugees from Cyre once the word gets around.

If a puppet master of some sort was pulling the kobolds' strings, this mastermind will be forced to act more directly. Kobolds are good at stealth and sneakiness, and their elimination as pawns means that any follow-up is likely to be far more brutal, direct, and dangerous to the people of Dannel's Pride.

Kobolds have a high birth rate and mature quickly. Thus, it's never a sure thing that they have been eliminated. After a short while, the thefts and problems start all over again, and the goodwill that the PCs earned from the people of Dannel's Pride vanishes because the refugees believe the job wasn't properly done.

To regain their respect and perhaps earn a new reward, the characters need to venture into the tunnels and crawlspaces beneath the ward once again, only this time their little enemies will be ready for them and looking for revenge.

A NEW RUIN

Mid-Level Adventure

OPENING

Drifting pieces of rubble from the floating ruins (page 19) constantly move in and out of sight, or break free during storms and float away from the city. Occasionally a piece blows back into the city, where it is secured and reattached to provide a new home, typically for those of Stormreach's elite who can afford to clear and renovate it.

A few months ago, one of these floating ruins came out of the jungle, moving *against* the wind, to hover above the city again. Despite significant construction on its surface, it showed no sign of habitation. It hung

there, silent and unchallenged, for so long that its return has faded from conversation.

That has changed now. Whoever or whatever is aboard the ruin has started attacking the other floating islands and towers during the night, killing and driving out their tenants and looting their homes. A lucky (and wealthy) survivor managed to make it to ground, and he wants to hire a discreet but powerful group to wreak revenge so that he can return to his home in the sky.

The survivor cannot tell the group anything about the people who did this—if they were in fact people. The recapture of the floating house entails obvious tactical challenges: ascending to the residence and then fighting room by room to clear it.

TWISTS AND TURNS

One of the following pieces of information is true.

- The attackers are the descendants of one of the old pirate captains who fled the city when it was taken over. The captain and his retainers settled somewhere deep in the jungle based around the floating fort. Now their descendants have returned in force, determined to take back what they see as theirs by right of bloodline. They plan to take over the skies of Stormreach and then threaten to rain down death upon the people below if their demands are not met. Regardless of any truth to their claims, they are a threat to the current order, and any attack by the characters will uncover their plans.
- The floating fort was the burial chamber of an ancient priest. Something out in the wild jungles caused the priest and those buried with her to rise, and she returned to Stormreach to obliterate the usurpers whom she believes must have destroyed the city she once knew. The inhabitants of the floating fort are conquering and “converting” floating towers and ruins into charnel houses full of the living dead.
- The fortress is under the control of a jungle tribe of troglodytes, and their wily and knowledgeable shaman has discovered how to steer the fort. This warrior band is proving its worth by attacking the city to carry off trophies, hoping to return to its tribe triumphant and rich. It is the shaman's intention to displace the tribal leader once he has shown his worth, which is why the fort lingers still. The shaman wants to amass a truly magnificent hoard of trophies so that there can be no question in the mind of the tribe about who should be leader.

CONCLUSION

The characters storm the residence and free it from the clutches of whichever force had taken it over. They can now receive their reward, or they can take it over for themselves—though doing this earns the wrath of their wealthy employer, who is still determined to reclaim the property. If they honorably perform their mission,

they earn the favor of the floating communities in the old forts, towers, and ruins. In the future, these people can provide the safest havens in all of Stormreach from prying eyes and vengeful enemies.

This new floating fortress is somewhat different from most of the ruins in Stormreach. Unlike most floating buildings, it can float under direction, slowly moving according to the whim of the pilot. It also contains a magic map that shows the locations of all the other floating ruins. Most of these are clustered around modern Stormreach, but others are displayed on the map as hovering far away in the interior of the continent.

This floating fortress could be made to fly slowly to home in upon these other ruins, which might contain ancient and powerful treasures of interest to scholars and plundering adventurers alike. A touch of the controls, and the adventurers can be off to explore another floating ruin.

EARTHQUAKE

Mid- to High-Level Adventure

OPENING

A sudden and terrible earthquake hits the city. Before the tremors subside, both ancient and new buildings collapse in Oldgate in a line heading toward the center of the city. Collapses intermittently happen in parts of Stormreach, but they usually occur on a small scale and affect only a handful of buildings. The ancient giant ruins are scarcely affected, but this earthquake has caused more damage than any collapse in living memory.

The night after the collapse, a strange vision appears in the Circle of Visions (page 18) all around the city. A cowed figure in a long robe appears in every one of the twelve rings of standing stones and makes demands in a masculine voice. The Storm Lords and the merchants of the city must either pay a vast ransom, or the hooded figure will bring the city down piece by piece. The earthquake was a demonstration of his power. The Storm Lords and merchants have two days to pay the sum he demands, or he is going to make good on his threat.

The Stormreach Guard and House Deneith are immediately stretched to the limit controlling the panicked populace and defending paranoid merchants and lords. An independent force—the adventurers—is tasked to collect on the large bounty on this maniac's head. They must find a way deep into the dungeons beneath the city where the madman is hiding, track him through the tunnels, defeat his minions, and find out how he is causing these earthquakes.

Less scrupulous adventurers might see an opportunity to extort the city patrons themselves if they can usurp whatever means the villain is using to cause the collapses. This possibility also makes the Storm Lords

nervous, so the PCs might be shadowed, despite their upstanding reputation, by Storm Lord agents.

TWISTS AND TURNS

One of the following pieces of information is true.

- The evil genius behind the earthquake attacks is one of the Storm Lords, acting through a proxy. It is his intent to weaken the other lords by collecting on the ransom and turning that wealth into leverage and power. The proxy he is using for the attacks is a skilled architect and artisan, who has an explicit link with the lord if he is identified or found and interrogated.
- The attacks are the work of a necromantic cult—perhaps a more radical wing of the Blood of Vol. This cult dug deep into the ancient chambers beneath the city and found the burial site of some long-dead giants. When these titanic bones were raised as undead skeletons, they retained the strength to shake the pillars and foundations of the city, breach its underground dungeons, and cause massive collapses in the city above.
- The mastermind behind the threat is a war criminal who fled to Stormreach. A master of animal training, he captured a delver beneath the city and bent this powerful and strange creature to his will. It allowed him to raid parts of the undercity that others could not, and he is well equipped with artifacts. He has rounded up some other easily impressed dungeon dwellers as followers to defend him and the poor delver from any possible assault while he waits for the powers that be to capitulate.

CONCLUSION

After descending into the shaky tunnels beneath the city, the PCs confront and kill the criminal who is threatening the whole city. This victory makes them true heroes of Stormreach—as much as anyone can be in such a place. Their deeds are sung in songs and depicted in plays, and lavish rewards are showered upon them: offers of political marriages to relatives of the Storm Lords, mansions, land, or ships. These rewards are offered in the hope that the fame and adoration of the adventurers rubs off on the sponsors.

However, even with the immediate threat taken care of, such a large series of collapses has far-reaching effects. A good deal more shaking occurs as the ground resettles. Some old tunnels seal up, trapping people in sewers and dungeons by changing the way the tunnels connect. Others tunnels crack open for the first time, granting access to corridors and buried buildings that have not yet been looted by explorers and adventurers.

The mechanism of the collapse (either the artifact that directly caused the collapse or the capability to control the creature or creatures that caused it) is of an unusual design, though it does bear a resemblance

to some of the work of the giant peoples found around the city. In the wake of the disaster, the citizenry is concerned about preventing another catastrophic collapse. The heroes who dealt with the problem originally must investigate further and discover where the mechanism came from in the first place—and if someone else has use of it, too.

In addition, the extortionists used a particular artifact to tap into the vision circles all at once to project a particular illusion. Such a device is extremely valuable, and the Storm Lords and other forces at work in the city realize its significance right away. The characters might also find usefulness in a device that can communicate with the whole city at once.

DARK TOWER

Mid- to High-Level Adventure

Stormreach has many secrets. Few are as closely held—or as important—as the truth behind the Tower of Kol Korran. Many residents see how protective and secretive the Kundarak dwarves are about their mysterious inner keep, but that's where it begins and ends. Even the most curious trust the dwarves not to be involved in anything that could put the city in danger—and in that, they are mistaken.

In reality, the Tower of Kol Korran is little more than a glorified tent existing primarily as concealment for what lies beyond. When the Kundarak dwarves first arrived, they found a substantial tract of open land on the eastern edge of the city, an area that had curiously escaped modern development until their arrival. Not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, the head of the operation, an ambitious noble named Korbek Ghedin, immediately staked a claim and began working on the plan that would one day transfer ownership of the area to his house.

Early in the process, Kundarak surveyors made a remarkable discovery. They unearthed a massive opening to a huge subterranean chamber. When Korbek saw what lay below, he could scarcely believe his eyes: a cavernous underground complex containing treasures untold from the days when giants ruled the city. His first act was to erect scaffolding around the site, both to hide the cavern entrance and to assist in the construction of a more permanent structure—a secure tower, to be named in honor of the god of commerce and wealth.

Unknown to the dwarves, the ancient chamber was as much prison as it was vault, and the shattering of its borders and wards resulted in unseen chain reactions. Among these unforeseen consequences was the accidental release of what is now the area's oldest living resident, a giant imprisoned here before the fall of its civilization (see *The Titan's Curse*, page 158). However, the greatest risk posed by the operation is its proximity to the resting place

of Sakinnirrot, the Scar that Abides (see *The Ship's Tiger*, page 156). The deeper the dwarves dig, the more they open the channel between the sleeping rajah and the unsuspecting city above—and the stronger Sakinnirrot grows.

Today, the tower serves two purposes beyond concealing the existence of the underground complex. First, its spacious interior hosts the processing of all ores mined beneath it, as well as the study of all relics from the Age of Giants. Second, the tower acts as a massive focal point for all the warding magic placed in and around it, precautions intended not only to keep intruders out but also to keep the area secure in the unlikely event of something wicked crawling up from the depths. Korbek Ghedin is, as ever, confident in the strength of these measures, but even he has no idea just what waits in the dark heart of the Dragon Below.

GETTING INVOLVED

Any number of avenues can lead a party of characters into investigating House Kundarak's affairs in Stormreach. The most direct of these might involve the PCs being hired—or, in the case of certain dragonmarked party members, commanded—to surreptitiously uncover the truth surrounding the dwarves' secret tower. Given the power dynamics at work in the city, the most logical candidate for such a brazen request would be Storm Lord Paulo Omaren, with or without the assistance of her dragonmarked paramour, Greigur d'Deneith. The Omaren family interests lie at odds with Storm Lord Amanatu's, and have for some generations now. If one of the PCs is a scion of House Deneith, he could scarcely refuse an offer from its local leader. Alternatively, Omaren might use one of her allies among the Iron Watch to persuade the characters to get involved, especially if one of them is a warforged. Either way, the DM has to decide whether or not to make her and/or Greigur's involvement known from the start.

If a somewhat less risky setup is called for, consider the following: Korbek Ghedin owes the continued privacy and prosperity of his operation to his own mind—not merely for its quick thinking and shrewd negotiating skills, but also for his gifts of manipulation and telepathy. He uses psionic charms the way veteran diplomats use bribes, and he always makes sure that all involved leave with clear consciences and fat purses. In the course of these many manipulations, the PCs could easily come across one of Korbek's former associates whose recollections of things don't precisely match those of the PCs, thanks to the dwarf's application of *psionic modify memory*. The most logical possibility for such a role would be Amilene Santor d'Sivis, the head of the local House Sivis operation, who has been psionically manipulated by Korbek more than any other character in Stormreach. (Both her close proximity and her arcane knowledge are potential threats

to him, and he has chosen to handle her directly and aggressively, confident in his ability to blame any memory gaps or behavior incongruities on the old gnome's eccentric good humor.)

It's also possible for the PCs to find themselves investigating the tower as part of the unfolding of the larger story about Stormreach's true origins and the existence of Sakinnirrot. Despite the many guards and wards, a capable and determined researcher could eventually trace the rumors of the existence of the Scar that Abides back to Coasthold. If you decide to bring this metaplot to the fore in your campaign, then it makes sense for the characters to eventually find themselves at the entrance of the Tower of Kol Korran—the literal doorway to hell.

However you ultimately decide to reveal the story of the tower, it's worth noting that any direct assault on the tower is probably doomed to fail. The wards are exceedingly strong and complex, and Korbek is instantly aware of anything that happens to any of his many sentries. The PCs could target Korbek himself, but he is a truly terrifying opponent, and he's never without his bodyguard Yarik. Any physical confrontation with Korbek would be a stiff challenge for even the mightiest of Eberron's adventurers. Although he's not eager to lose his primary advantage in Stormreach, Korbek is not a stupid person. Given proof of the true threat, he might be persuaded to end his tower operation of his own accord, if you decide to allow the PCs to resolve the matter without combat.

KORBEK GHEDIN

CR 12

Male dwarf aristocrat 1/fighter 1/psion (telepath) 10
LE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +7, Spot +7;
ubiquitous vision

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant,
Gnome, Infernal; telepathic speech

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; +4 against giants, Combat
Expertise, ubiquitous vision

hp 74 (12 HD); **DR** 3/—

Resist stability (+4 against bull rush and trip)

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +14; +2 against poison, spells, and
spell-like abilities

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 earthbound dwarven waraxe +11/+6 (1d10+5
[plus 2d6 if focused]/×3) or

Melee +1 earthbound dwarven waraxe +9/+4 (1d10+2 [plus
2d6 if focused]/×3) if not touching ground

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Psionic
Endowment, Psionic Weapon

Psion Powers Known (ML 10th; 108 PPs):

5th—*mind probe* (DC 20), *psionic true seeing*

4th—*energy adaptation*, *psionic dimension door*, *psionic dominate*
(DC 19+), *psionic modify memory* (DC 19), *schism*

3rd—*false sensory input* (DC 18), *greater concealing amorphia*,
hostile empathic transfer (DC 18), *ubiquitous vision**



Korbek Ghedin and Yarik



Someone's been a very naughty girl. . . .

2nd—cloud mind (DC 17), energy stun (8d6+8, DC 24), forced sense link (DC 17), read thoughts (DC 17)

1st—conceal thoughts, dissipating touch (ranged touch +8, 10d6), force screen, mindlink*, offensive precognition, psionic charm (DC 18)

* Already manifested

Powers above are assumed to be augmented when possible.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12

SQ stonemasonry, weapon familiarity

Feats Combat Expertise^B, Combat Manifestation^B, Least Mark of Warding (misdirection), Power Attack, Psicrystal Affinity^B, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation, Psionic Weapon

Skills Appraise +8 (+10 metal, +12 stone), Autohypnosis +5, Bluff +13, Concentration +12, Craft (stonework) +15, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Gather Information +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +9, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Knowledge (psionics) +9, Listen +7, Search +4 (+6 secret doors and compartments), Psicraft +13, Spot +7, Swim +1

Possessions dwarven plate, mithral heavy shield, +1 earthbound dwarven waraxe, cloak of resistance +2, hat of disguise, psicrystal ("Liar" personality)

FOR PITY'S SAKE

Mid-Level Adventure

Many travelers have heard whispered tales of the serpent people that live in Xen'drik's interior, a race of psionically endowed humanoids known as the yuan-ti. Some even know of the origins of the strange race, of how it fled persecution in its homeland of Sarlona only to face similar maltreatment at the hands of the dragon lords of Argonnessen. They know that by the time the yuan-ti arrived in Xen'drik, they had decided that they would never again be driven from their homes and lands. Few know, however, that the yuan-ti themselves are a race divided.

During the Age of Demons, only two forces were capable and determined enough to challenge the demons' collective might. The dragons are said to be the children of Siberys and Eberron, the mightiest of all mortal creatures. These same myths say that when Siberys's blood fell from the sky, some of the drops quickened before they reached Eberron, becoming a race of pure immortal beings. These were the couatls, feathered serpents whose compassion was matched only by their psionic and magical aptitude. After eons of war, the couatl prophet Hezcalipa led her people in a momentous sacrifice to end the terrible war. The majority of the couatls gave their lives, weaving their immortal essence into a pure force that could bind even the demon lords of the first age. This was the end of the Age of Demons, but it cost the couatl race nearly everything it was—nearly.

Before the couatls made their final sacrifice, they sought to preserve what little they could of their legacy. Although most of the humanoid races were extremely primitive, the couatls found useful servants among the humans of Sarlona. As the war reached its final days, entire human tribes lived among the couatls, serving them faithfully and learning what they could of kindness, peace . . . and sacrifice. When the couatls realized the price they would have to pay to end the Overlords' reign of terror, they gathered their most devoted human followers and made them an offer: The few couatls who would survive the final conflict would invest some of themselves in their followers, altering them in body and soul so they could carry some of the pure silver flame of their mentors with them into the future.

Knowing that the couatls were about to disappear from Eberron forever, these humans were honored and humbled by the request, and they accepted. The resulting bloodline, a psionically engineered union between the couatls and humanity, was known as the shulassakar. For a time, these beings prospered. Ruins of shulassakar cities can be found across Sarlona, and for a time the nation of Khalesh was ruled by shulassakar lords. In the present day, however, the shulassakar are rare. Over the course of thousands of years, the

Lords of Dust, the Cults of the Dragon Below, and the Inspired targeted the shulassakar. Despite this onslaught, they continue to fight the forces of evil and to be worthy of the legacy of the Silver Flame.

The shulassakar of Xen'drik remain hidden in the deep jungles. In recent years, the most active among them has been Sesstaria (female transcendent shulassakar paladin 3), a strong and humorless champion of the cause. Recently, Sesstaria led a daring mission into a yuan-ti encampment on the banks of the Hydra River. There, the shulassakar were horrified to discover a breeding colony for yuan-ti wretchlings (SX 86) complete with barracks for both the “finished” wretchlings and for the human slaves that would one day become wretchlings.

Disgusted and enraged, Sesstaria ordered every nonhuman put to the sword. The paladin’s chief

healer, a bloodsworn shulassakar priest named Surayana, was familiar with this policy. But when she discovered a crèche filled with wretchling children, compassion overtook her, and she fled with the children to Stormreach.

GETTING INVOLVED

As a bloodsworn shulassakar (see the sidebar), Surayana passes easily for a human, and she has managed to find a place to hole up in the Harbor district of Stormreach. There, she looks after the four wretchling children (three boys and a mischievous little girl she calls Mud Hen) while planning her next move. She knows that Sesstaria won’t enter Stormreach, but she fears that the paladin might send one or more agents into the city after her and the children.

SHULASSAKAR CHARACTERS

Like the yuan-ti, the shulassakar are divided into three distinct subraces. Where the yuan-ti are the purebloods, halfbloods, and abominations, the shulassakar are bloodsworn, flametouched, and transcendent. Of the three, the bloodsworn shulassakar are the most appropriate for use as player characters. In fact, they more easily pass for human than do yuan-ti purebloods, having no forked tongue to give them away.

Bloodsworn shulassakar have beautiful, colorful markings on their skin. These are easily mistaken for tattoos. They are mutable, and they shift color and shape in response to the mood of the bearer. The extent of these markings varies from one creature to another.

As player characters, bloodsworn shulassakar have the following racial traits.

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma.
- Medium size.
- A bloodsworn shulassakar’s base land speed is 30 feet.

- Darkvision out to 60 feet.

— **Racial Hit Dice:** A bloodsworn shulassakar begins with four levels of monstrous humanoid, which provide 4d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +4, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +4, and Will +4.

— **Racial Skills:** A bloodsworn shulassakar’s monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $7 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier})$. Its class skills are Concentration, Heal, Knowledge (any), Listen, Spot, and Survival.

— **Racial Feats:** A bloodsworn shulassakar’s monstrous humanoid levels give it two feats. In addition, all shulassakar receive Alertness, Blind-Fight, and Knightly Training as bonus feats.

— All shulassakar are proficient in the use of the longbow and composite longbow.

— +1 natural armor bonus.

— **Special Attacks:** Psi-like abilities or spell-like abilities (see below).

— **Special Qualities:** *Alternate form*, *detect poison*, spell resistance equal to 14 + class level.

— **Automatic Languages:** Celestial, Common.
Bonus Languages: Draconic, Giant, Halfling, Riedran.

— **Favored Class:** Ranger.

— Level adjustment +2.

Alternate Form (Sp): Shulassakar can assume the form of a Tiny to Large feathered viper (MM 280) as a spell-like or psionic ability. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell (caster level 19th), but a shulassakar does not regain any hit points for changing form, and it can only assume (feathered) viper forms.

Detect Poison (Sp): All shulassakar have the ability to *detect poison* as the spell (caster level 6th).

Psi-Like Abilities: 3/day—*detect hostile intent*, *psionic charm* (affects animals, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids, DC 11 + Cha modifier), *psionic daze* (DC 11 + Cha modifier); 1/day—*aversion* (DC 12 + Cha modifier), *concealing amorpha*, *control light*, *entangling ectoplasm* (up to Large creatures). Manifestor level equals 1/2 Hit Dice (minimum 3rd).

If your campaign doesn’t use *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, replace the psi-like abilities above with the following spell-like abilities:

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th): 1/day—*animal trance* (DC 13), *cause fear* (DC 12), *charm person* (DC 12), *entangle* (DC 12), *light*.

The easiest way to integrate Surrayana and her moral quandary into the campaign would be to have Mud Hen get out one day while Surrayana is away (despite her strict instructions to all the children that they not leave their hidey-hole). The appearance of a little serpent child attracts the attention of one or more of the Harbor's residents, some of whom might even know what the child is. The PCs might be happening by and witness either the initial alarm or the city guards' approach. Alternatively, Mud Hen could escape into the city without notice, causing Surrayana to panic and seek the assistance of a group of individuals she feels might be sympathetic to her and the children's plight.

However you intend to use Surrayana, note that the children are neither good nor evil. (If the story requires an alignment, make them chaotic neutral.) They are merely children, alone in a strange and unforgiving city and bereft of any support but what they receive from Surrayana. If anything were to happen to her, their situation would become dire.

SURRAYANA

CR 8

Female bloodsworn shulassakar cleric 5

CG Medium monstrous humanoid (psionic)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Celestial

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; **Dodge**

hp 58 (9 HD)

Immune critical hits (25%)

SR 19

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *merciful morningstar* +9/+4 (1d8+1 plus 1d6 nonlethal)

Ranged sling +10 (1d4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +8

Atk Options turn undead 5/day (+3, 2d6+8, 5th)

Special Actions psi-like abilities or spell-like abilities (see sidebar)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th):

3rd—*dispel magic*, *magic circle against law*, *prayer*^D

2nd—*bull's strength*^D, *hold person* (DC 16), *shield other*, *silence*

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *enlarge person*^D, *shield of faith*

0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*

D Domain spell. Domains: Community (calm emotions 1/day, DC 16), Strength (feat of strength 1/day).

Abilities Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14

SQ alternate form, detect poison

Feats Alertness^B, Blind-Fight^B, Combat Casting, Dodge, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Track

Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +10, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Survival +5

Possessions +1 *merciful morningstar*, +1 *heavy shield of light fortification*, masterwork studded leather

Alternate Form (Sp) see sidebar

Detect Poison (Sp) see sidebar

HOUSE OF SHADOWS

Mid- to High-Level Adventure

No rational person would ever assume that the elves of House Thuranni aren't up to something, but few suspect the true extent of the house's operations in Stormreach—or how long its plans have been in motion. To understand the present situation, one must first understand the true nature of the family that sits in control of the house's local interests.

Everyone knows that House Thuranni has no proper enclave in Stormreach, and almost as many realize that Shadows (the high-end brothel in Locksmith Square) is, as a result, the next best thing. Shadows is owned and operated by the Uruvai, the least politically active of the six families of House Thuranni, and serves as a front for much darker schemes. In truth, the Uruvai family is in league with Vol, the Lich Queen of the Dead, who provided the funding and political cover the family required to set up shop in Stormreach. Their alliance is one of both blood and convenience—one that has already yielded spectacular results.

The Uruvai is a family of necromancers, elves who revere the old ways left behind when their race departed Xen'drik for Aerenal nearly forty thousand years ago. The Uruvai family claims to trace its lineage back to the Qabalrin, the oldest and mightiest necromancers the world has ever known. The Uruvai shares this tradition and perspective with Vol herself, who uses the Uruvai to do her will in Xen'drik.

With help provided by a skilled archaeologist of the Emerald Claw known as the White Raven (page 86), the Uruvai family discovered the location of a long-lost tomb buried in the former location of the ancient Qabalrin city near the Ring of Storms. From Stormreach, the Uruvai oversaw the White Raven's expedition to that sacred site, where the archaeologist recovered a sarcophagus containing an ancient vampire—the last one created during the height of the Qabalrin civilization, if the word of Vol is to be believed.

Once among the mightiest of the ancient Qabalrin necromancers, this vampire might be the key to releasing Vol from her endless torment and resurrecting the power of the Mark of Death. Although Vol is herself a mighty spellweaver, she is less experienced in the Qabalrin way than the vampire and lacks any blood (the key component to Qabalrin necromancy) herself. Vol's ultimate goal is to awaken the ancient necromancer and return him to his full strength, whereafter he will teach her (or give her) the means by which she can change the course of history.

In the interim, Vol continues to use the Uruvai family of the Thuranni to further her schemes.

With data she has been collecting for centuries, Vol is slowly but surely tracking down her own mortal descendants—those who would today have good claim to nobility in a dragonmarked house, had their own house not been betrayed—and bringing them into House Thuranni under the Uruvai banner. House Vol is returning to Eberron, and it hides behind a mask called the Uruvai.

GETTING INVOLVED

Although it's too late for anyone to prevent Vol's agents among both the Emerald Claw and the Uruvai from locating and retrieving the ancient vampire, the true calamity is still on the horizon. If the vampire regains his full strength, and if he does indeed have the power to help Vol resurrect the Mark of Death, then Eberron could be headed into a new age of darkness—a bloody time filled with the vengeance that Vol will surely exact on those she blames for nearly three millennia of frustration and persecution. Now that the vampire is found, the next step in Vol's plan involves the accumulation of numerous Khyber dragonshards, specifically those from the area in and around the Ring of Storms—stones that are suffused with the power of the Qabalin. Vol has set the Uruvai family on this task, and it is presently collecting information for the massive operation.

Lady Miravella, the head of the Uruvai family in Stormreach, is dimly aware of the presence of an entity of great power in and beneath the city, but its existence factors little into her day-to-day plans. Her primary concerns include the collection of the necessary dragonshards and the preparations required to use them in the incantations over the vampire. Beyond that, she continues to manage Shadows as an information-gathering tool, and she sends regular updates on the gossip she collects to her mistress Vol, with whom she is in direct contact. It's unlikely that the PCs will have much direct contact with Miravella, but if one or more of them is a scion of House Thuranni, she might interact with them for the sake of keeping up appearances.

If the PCs get involved, it will likely be through the White Raven. Not only is he the primary active functionary for Vol's/Miravella's schemes in Xen'drik, he is also a substantial personality in his own right, one who should feature as a recurring rival to the PCs' interests. You are encouraged to have the PCs thwarted once or twice by the White Raven, who always shows up at important archaeological sites just before they do, making off with whatever's most valuable or important in each case. By the time they uncover the truth behind his activities in Xen'drik, they should be chomping at the bit for a chance to get even.

When the PCs get too close to the truth of House Thuranni's involvement, one or more of them will receive a nighttime visit from Vaedin, Lady Miravella's nephew and one of the most accomplished assassins in Xen'drik. If he fails to dispose of his quarry, have him escape the first time to build momentum for the final conflict yet to come.

VAEDIN

CR 9

Male elf soulknife^{EPH} 6/assassin 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; **Dodge**, uncanny dodge
hp 57 (9 HD)

Immune magic sleep effects

Fort +6 (+7 against poison), **Ref** +12, **Will** +8; +2 against enchantments and disease

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), 40 ft. when focused; **Speed of Thought**, *slippers of spider climbing*

Melee +1 keen mind blade +10/+5 (1d6+3/17–20)

Ranged +1 keen mind blade +12/+7 (1d6+3/17–20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Atk Options death attack (DC 15), poison (contact, DC 13, paralysis/none), Psionic Weapon, psychic strike, sneak attack +2d6, throw mind blade

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Assassin Spells Known (CL 3rd):

2nd (1/day)—*invisibility*, *undetected alignment*

1st (3/day)—*true strike*, *disguise self*, *jump*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ detect secret/concealed doors, free draw, poison use

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Psionic Meditation, Psionic Weapon, Speed of Thought^B, Weapon Focus (mind blade)^B, Wild Talent^B

Skills Autohypnosis +8, Balance +10, Concentration +9, Disable Device +8, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +12, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +10, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +8, Tumble +12, Use Rope +4 (+6 with bindings)

Possessions masterwork buckler, +1 mithral shirt, 2 vials of carrion crawler brain juice, headband of intellect +2, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *vest of escape*

Psychic Strike (Su) As a move action, Vaedin can imbue his mind blade with psychic energy. This effect deals an extra 1d8 points of damage to the next living, non-mindless creature he strikes. Creatures immune to mind-affecting spells and abilities are immune to this extra damage. The mind blade deals this extra damage only once, but he can imbue it with psychic energy again by taking another move action.

Throw Mind Blade (Ex) Vaedin can throw his mind blade as a ranged weapon with a range increment of 30 feet. He can use his ranged mind blade in conjunction with other special abilities.

MAW OF THE DEVOURER

Mid- to High-Level Adventure

One of the more complicated and delicate matters for many Stormreachers involves their city's ongoing relations with the sahuagin that literally surround their coastal home. Most residents (especially those who live in the Harbor district or make a living from the sea) know of House Lyrandar's tenuous treaty with the sahuagin of Shargon's Teeth. Those same residents mistakenly assume that occasional attacks involving sahuagin are signs that the relationship is tenuous. In fact, the agreement between the city (via House Lyrandar) and the sahuagin lords remains strong. The true source of the attacks is a rogue element within the sahuagin themselves.

The sahuagin are exclusive devotees of the Devourer. Only a rare few choose to offer their worship to any other deity. However, within the sahuagin Devourer religion a massive sectarian rift has opened, one that threatens not only the local sahuagin population, but also the land-dwelling residents of Stormreach. The figure at the center of this divide is a messianic figure named K'shegla, an almost insanely fervent believer in the darker side of Devourer belief. According to K'shegla and his followers, the priest Khalaash at Shargon's Talon is blaspheming his faith and shaming his people by sharing the sahuagin faith with the land-dwellers. To them, his ongoing treaty is not only cowardly, but also heretical.

One of the most ancient practices of the sahuagin religion involves the ritual slaughter and consumption of one's enemies. Khalaash has restricted this practice and kept it hidden from the surface-dwellers. K'shegla once served with Khalaash, but after a long rivalry, K'shegla slaughtered one of the human priests and consumed his flesh, transforming himself into a malenti and launching his career as a sahuagin messiah.

A devoted admirer of prophecy, K'shegla believes that he is the savior warlord spoken of in ancient sahuagin lore. The prophecy tells of a "smoothskin" (malenti) who will rise to lead his people into an age of victory and supremacy over the land-walkers. Part of the prophecy speaks of this messiah figure besting a great beast of the sea. The savior will devour the beast's essence and transform into the mighty leader he will be when the final conflict arrives. To prove he was indeed the figure spoken of in prophecy, K'shegla led an expedition out past Shargon's Teeth into the open sea, where he encountered a young adult kraken and brought the beast low (at a cost of many sahuagin lives). This victory was impressive enough, but the real test came when he retreated to a secluded coral reef to devour the thing's black heart and brain. When he emerged three days later,

he was again transformed. K'shegla is now a unique aberration, a four-armed malenti with black eyes and silver-sheened skin. His form strikes awe in the hearts of his own race, and primal terror in the minds of other humanoids.

As a result of his startling metamorphosis, K'shegla has all but cemented his position as the savior warlord spoken of in prophecy by his followers. According to the prophecies, this figure, called the *Shirrin Kho* in the sahuagin tongue, must overcome one more trial before he is ready to lead his people to victory. He must locate and devour one particular land-walker—a person spoken of in the prophecies in very cryptic terms. Only when this individual is found, sacrificed, and ritually devoured will the *Shirrin Kho*'s transformation be complete, and only then will the Devourer grant him the blessing and the power to take control of his people—and make his destiny their own.

GETTING INVOLVED

The easiest way to get the PCs involved in K'shegla's scheme is perhaps the most grisly. It's possible that one of the PCs fits the description of the individual spoken of in K'shegla's prophecies, leading him to send his minions to capture that person and bring him or her back for questioning. (He gives his agents the means of providing land-walkers with the ability to breathe water. He loathes stepping onto land and has vowed not to do so until that act serves as a first step toward conquest.) It's even possible that a character would survive such an encounter. For a target to survive, K'shegla must be convinced that he's got the wrong person.

The PCs can also get involved with K'shegla through the Raiders of the Gray Pearl (*SX 64*), a band of sahuagin that makes regular raids on coastal travelers and small ships entering or leaving Stormreach. The Raiders are led by a fellow malenti named Korel, who is in fact K'shegla's primary agent on land. Since K'shegla never leaves the water, it would be a simpler proposition for PCs to come across K'shegla's story by way of the Raiders, who might be encountered breaking into the PCs' home.

Another possible lead-in involves the high priest Khalaash. With K'shegla's transformation and the resultant popularity of his cause among the sahuagin, the priest might decide that the time has come for him to come clean about the dangers posed by his extremist sectarian rival. If one of the PCs is a scion of House Lyrandar, agents of the sahuagin could call upon that character (and possibly others of his house) to meet in secret to discuss the matter. If all goes well, such a meeting might preface a large-scale combat, wherein the PCs accompany the sahuagin into the depths of the sea below Stormreach to face down the mad messiah.

K'SHEGLA**CR 12**

Male malenti (mutant sahuagin) of legend cleric 7

LE Medium outsider (aquatic)

Init +9; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8**Languages** Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Sahuagin, speak with sharks**AC** 25, touch 15, flat-footed 20**hp** 94 (9 HD); **DR** 10/magic**Immune** electricity, poison**Weaknesses** freshwater sensitivity, light blindness**Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft.**Melee** scimitar +14/+9 (1d6+9/18–20) and light pick +13 (1d4+8/×4 plus 3d8 plus possible deafening) and trident +14 (1d8+12)**Ranged** 2 heavy crossbows +10/+10 (1d10/19–20)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Atk Options** blood frenzy, Power Attack**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +14**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 7th):4th—*control water*^D, *divine power*3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *contagion*^D (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*2nd—*bull's strength*, *enthrall* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15), *shatter*^D (DC 15), *silence*1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*^D, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*

D Domain spell. Domains: Destruction (smite 1/day), Water (turn fire creatures/rebuke water creatures).

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 22, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 13**SQ** raging blood, water dependent**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative^B, Multi-attack^B, Multiweapon Fighting, Power Attack, Quick Draw**Skills** Handle Animal +6, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +8, Profession (hunter) +7, Ride +7, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +9, Spot +8, Survival +7**Possessions** +2 scimitar, +1 thundering light pick, trident of warning**Blood Frenzy (Ex)** Once per day when K'shegla takes damage in combat, he can fly into a frenzy the following round, attacking furiously until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +2 Constitution and +2 Strength, and takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. It can't end its frenzy voluntarily.**Speak with Sharks (Ex)** K'shegla can communicate telepathically with sharks up to 150 feet away. The communication is limited to simple concepts such as "food," "danger," and "enemy."**Freshwater Sensitivity (Ex)** If K'shegla is immersed in fresh water, he must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued.**Light Blindness (Ex)** Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as a *daylight* spell) blinds

K'shegla for 1 round and dazzles him in subsequent rounds as long as he remains in the light.

Raging Blood (Su) Each time K'shegla is dealt damage with a piercing or slashing attack, a 5-foot cone of electricity jets from the wound, dealing 1d4 points of electricity damage to all in range.**Water Dependent (Ex)** K'shegla can survive out of the water for 11 hours. After that amount of time, he begins to suffocate and might drown (see *DMG* 304).**Skills** A sahuagin has a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform an action or avoid a hazard. It can take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered, and can perform the run action when swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. Sahuagin have a +4 bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks underwater (already calculated in the above statistics).*K'shegla, the Shirrin Kho*

THE SHIP'S TIGER

High-Level Adventure

Of all the inns in Stormreach, one of the most popular among adventuring parties—particularly those containing spellcasters—is the Ship's Cat (page 50), a densewood building in downtown Southwatch. Few adventurers would patronize the place if they learned the truth about its proprietor, Harysh. The woman appears to be a good-natured shifter with a genuine, if strangely obsessive, love for street cats. And that's precisely what she is—or, rather, what she *was*.

Not long ago, an ancient evil arrived in Stormreach in search of its destiny. The rakshasa Kashurashan

(page 58) has long watched over the city. Recent reports he received suggested that a great power bound in the depths was finally stirring, so he sent for Lorishto, a rakshasa of the powerful ak'chazar caste, to establish contact with that entity, known as the Scar That Abides.

Soon after his arrival in Stormreach, Lorishto set his sights on what he felt was the perfect identity to assume: a local innkeeper named Harysh. Rather than kill the shifter, he chose merely to incapacitate her in the event he needed to use her as leverage at some future date. Her soul remains trapped in a Khyber dragonshard that he keeps in the care of his two most powerful mummies. Lorishto has probed her mind and searched his belongings at length, and

SCAR BENEATH THE CITY

One of the greatest secrets of Stormreach is also among its very oldest. Over one hundred thousand years ago, Xen'drik was home to an entity of incredible power and hate, one of a group of godlike beings called the *Na-Vakhti*—creatures known to the mortal world as the rajahs of the rakshasa race. (The true name for this ancient evil is an expression in the rakshasa dialect of Infernal that translates roughly to "Overlords.") Territorial even by demonic standards, this Overlord laid claim to Xen'drik, demanding obeisance even from others of its kind. The entity's name was Sakinniro, and like its sibling Overlords, its rule ended when the pure force of the newly kindled Silver Flame bound it.

A new, dark age for Xen'drik followed the end of the Age of Demons. The giants who rose to prominence eventually made their way to the northern reaches of their island home. There they founded a new city built along the equator—Sakinniro's former domain—on top of the desolate ancient city and quickly claimed the ruins for their own. They scoured the ruins, and in the dust among the stones, they unearthed crude records drawn on crumbling walls and etched into broken tablets. From this lore, the giants learned of their new home as it used to be: a city of slaves who toiled at the whim of powerful overlords—who made them prosper—and found inspiration in it. The giant civilization began to grow, in part with the aid of what they uncovered in the ruins, and as it did, the demon lord beneath their feet stirred.

The giants accomplished much in the age to follow, and Sakinniro was the long shadow cast beneath their ever-rising star. Over the passage of millennia, some of the more erudite and spiritually sensitive among the city's giants began to suspect something was wrong with their adopted home,

but there was no achievement colossal enough to make the feeling go away, no incantation mighty enough to provide the answers they sought. When at last their seekings brought the destruction of their civilization down upon them, Sakinniro was pleased—and strengthened—and it patiently awaited the arrival of the next civilization foolish enough to call its former charnel palace home. In a very real sense, Sakinniro is Stormreach and vice versa, and the fate of the two has always been and shall remain inexorably intertwined.

In contrast to some of the other Overlords whose names are known to select scholars outside the cults of the Dragon Below and the Lords of Dust, the name of Sakinniro is unknown outside the Lords of Dust, and even among fiends few will speak its name. This reticence is not due to any lack of power or influence on the part of the rajahs. In fact, the opposite is true, since Sakinniro is so powerful that even its own cultists hesitate to speak its name aloud, let alone write it down for others to find. They say that every time a mortal speaks, reads, or writes the name of Sakinniro, the dark force to which the name belongs grows restive.

Sakinniro is bound, but its anger can reach beyond the walls of its prison, bringing misfortune to any who draw its attention. Cult doctrine holds that Sakinniro will allow no mention of its name upon mortal lips until and unless it stands before them as the conquering god it knows itself to be. Only then, when the races of the Dragon Between lie bloody and cowed before it, will Sakinniro abide the sound of its own name. Until then, it will be known only by the sobriquet used by its followers: "the Scar that Abides."

Clerics who revere Sakinniro prefer the Destruction, Meditation, and Passion domains.

he understands her more than well enough to “play” her convincingly. With the stage thus set, Lorishto was free to begin work on the mission for which he was born: the rebirth of his patron, Sakinnriot (see the sidebar).

Lorishto’s patron is widely believed to be the literal embodiment of the spite and the patient rage of the Dragon Below, birthed by the Dragon’s own meticulous hand. Those who worship the Scar that Abides say that Sakinnriot was the first Overlord conceived by Khyber but the last to actually be born, and that its protracted gestation partly accounts for its substantial power. It is patron to all those who plot bloody revenge, reveling in the gratification of a grudge satisfied. Its following is the cult of an injury savored, and wounds of both a physical and spiritual nature are left to fester in its name. Sakinnriot finds sudden or unfocused rage weak, and exhorts its supplicants to be patient in bringing a vengeful hate to a slow boil. In this regard, its primary rival is another of its own kind—the rajah known as Rak Tulkhesh, “the Rage of War,” whom it considers a savage fool.

Within the mortal realm, Sakinnriot bears a special loathing for the dragonmarked houses, and it grows stronger with each interhouse dispute that ends in violence. Any cultist responsible for single-handedly driving two groups of dragonmarked mortals into mutual ruin is said to earn no small measure of favor from the Scar that Abides.

GETTING INVOLVED

In his time in Stormreach, Lorishto has learned a lot about the Scar that Abides. He knows that Sakinnriot is growing stronger, and although he has no direct knowledge of House Kundarak’s operation (page 65), certain passages in the prophecies of his line lead him to believe that the dwarves have a key role to play in the eventual awakening and ascension of his Overlord. Lorishto also knows the means by which he might commune with Sakinnriot: He must meditate over the corpse of a victim of a dragonmarked house member’s revenge. He is presently fomenting the type of discontent that will provide him with plenty of tools for communication, but he has yet to establish any meaningful contact. He has received only brief images and sudden sensations of dark emotion.

It is in this regard the PCs can intersect with Lorishto’s presence. Perhaps one of those killed by Lorishto’s intrigues was a relative or associate of one of the PCs, and the character begins to suspect that someone else is responsible for sending the houses into conflict.

Alternatively, Lorishto might be introduced into the campaign by way of its present impersonation. It’s unlikely that the PCs would ever know that they weren’t dealing with the real Harysh, but

it would be a simple matter to introduce a character who has some legitimate reason to be suspicious of Lorishto’s otherwise convincing charade. Once such a character confesses his concerns to the PCs, the plot is off and running.

Lorishto’s activities might also be uncovered by means of his necromantic practices. Stormreach is a permissive city, but the presence of undead still sets off a few alarms, and if he’s not careful, Lorishto’s otherwise insignificant undead minions might lead his enemies right to him. In addition, Lorishto needs fresh corpses to commune with his Overlord. Dragonmarked houses are not happy to find out that they are victims of grave robbing. Even if Lorishto covers his tracks, the PCs might be set on his trail by evidence of the missing bodies.

LORISHTO

CR 15

Male ak’chazar rakshasa

LE Medium outsider (native)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +24, Spot +24

Languages Common, Giant, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23

hp 144 plus 1d10+10 (17 HD, false life); **DR** 15/good and piercing

Immune detect thoughts, discern lies

SR 31

Fort +14, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +19 each (1d4+2) and bite +14 (1d6+1)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Atk Options pain wave, rebuke undead 9/day (+6, 2d6+26, 20th)

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +19

Combat Gear *quicken metamagic rod* (lesser), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 8th, 50 charges)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th):

3/day—*animate dead*

2/day—*control undead* (DC 23), *create undead*

1/day—*create greater undead*, *magic jar* (DC 21), *trap the soul* (DC 24)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th):

6th (4/day)—*disintegrate* (+22 ranged touch, DC 22)

5th (6/day)—*dominate person* (DC 22), *teleport*

4th (7/day)—*charm monster* (DC 21), *confusion* (DC 21), *enervation* (+22 ranged touch)

3rd (7/day)—*cloak of Khyber** (see page 59), *halt undead* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 20)

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *false life**, *mirror image*, *mindburn*^{ME} (DC 19), *suppress dragonmark*^{ME} (DC 18)

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 18), *chill touch* (+19 melee touch, DC 18), *detect undead*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (+22 ranged touch)

0 (6/day)—*amanuensis*^{SC}, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (+19 melee touch, DC 17)

* Already cast

Abilities Str 15, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 19, Wis 19, Cha 22

SQ change shape, outsider traits

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Silent Spell, Still Spell

Skills Bluff +30, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +24, Disguise +16 (+18 acting), Escape Artist +25, Gather Information +16, Hide +20, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +24, Move Silently +20, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +26, Spot +24, Survival +4 (+6 outer planes), Use Rope +5 (+7 bindings)

Possessions combat gear plus Khyber shard (material component for *cloak of Khyber* spell), *ring of mind shielding*

Change Shape (Su) Lorishto can assume any humanoid form, or revert to his own form, as a standard action. Because he's assuming a shifter's form, he does not lose his claw and bite attacks. A *true seeing* spell does not reveal his natural form because he is under the effect of a *cloak of Khyber* spell.

Pain Wave (Su) Three times per day, for 17 rounds each time, Lorishto can emit an aura of negative energy as a free action. Any creature within 20 feet is subject to *inflict moderate wounds* (caster level 20th) and becomes shaken for 1d6+1 rounds. A DC 24 Will save negates the shaken effect and halves the damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

THE TITAN'S CURSE

High-Level Adventure

Nearly forty thousand years ago, the city that would one day become Stormreach was the academic center of the mighty Cul'sir Empire. In comparison to their contemporaries among the Sul'at giants of Karul'Tash, the Cul'sir giants couldn't have been more different. Where the Sul'at were fierce and tribal, the forebears of today's fire giant clans, the Cul'sir were a sophisticated and integrated society, composed primarily of ancestors of the modern cloud giants and storm giants. For the betterment of their civilization, the Cul'sir chose to break with tradition and unite under a single emperor, and for thousands of years their society was the preeminent one in Xen'drik. (The Cul'sir even claimed that it was their works alone that drew the attention of Argonnessen, and that the secrets of dragon magic would have remained lost to giantkind were it not for them.) All this would change with the coming of the quori.

As advanced as they were, the Cul'sir were nevertheless unprepared for an invasion of such scale. Their arcane advances were considerable, but the Cul'sir had no war machine to speak of and had opted to expend most of their resources on the infrastructure of the empire and the development of other civic works (as was proper for any truly civilized people). As such, the Cul'sir were caught largely unaware when the quori invaded, and they suffered

substantial losses at the outset of hostilities. For their part, the Sul'at were emboldened, taking the invasion as an opportunity to demonstrate their superiority to the Cul'sir in matters of war. And indeed, it was the Sul'at League that finally produced the Moon Breaker—the doomsday weapon that decimated the quori and sealed off their home plane of Dal Quor from Eberron.

The result was a largely embarrassing campaign for the Cul'sir giants, whose slave races took their masters' failures during the war as signs of weakness. When a revolt broke out, the emperor (who had feared just such an eventuality) immediately called upon his learned spellcasters to craft a doomsday weapon of their own, one so ingenious that it could suppress the uprising without unleashing the destruction the Sul'at weapon had caused.

One of those assigned to the task was a gifted arcanist by the name of Antaegus, who was rare among his kind for being born with magical aptitude (as opposed to the academic wizardry others learned). As work on the new weapon progressed, serious misgivings began to plague Antaegus. For what he deemed "security reasons," the emperor had ordered the weapon researched and assembled by different teams, each ignorant of what the others were doing. In his private divinations, Antaegus saw great calamity on the horizon and feared that the emperor was taking his people down a truly dark path—the *wrong* path. There had been no time to study the repercussions of the Sul'at weapon, and he suspected pride to be the emperor's motivation in ordering this creation. Despite the emperor's decree, Antaegus decided that he needed to know just what he was participating in. And so he broke into his master's laboratory.

What Antaegus uncovered left him shocked and confused. The emperor's demand called for a weapon that would release a horrible contagion into the air, one that would affect the slave races without doing any damage to the giants' lands or buildings. Further, the weapon would draw on an ancient source of power—malevolent power—to provide the dark energy required to generate and release a magical plague of such proportions. This source of sentient power was old when the world was young—and it sat beneath the imperial city.

At a loss, Antaegus gathered up what materials he could, including the entirety of his team's work on the project and, in a moment of desperation, destroyed them. In an instant, he single-handedly set the Cul'sir emperor's plan back a year or more. When the emperor heard the news, he called for Antaegus's immediate execution, but his own advisors thwarted him, since they saw the honor in what the sorcerer had done and defended his right to live. In the end, the emperor "banished" Antaegus until the end of the war, at which time his final fate

would be decided. The emperor forced Antaegus's former associates to imprison the sorcerer in a specially prepared object that magically suspended its occupant's life functions.

Obviously, the war did not go nearly as well for the emperor as he had expected, and almost forty millennia passed before the Kundarak dwarves finally returned Antaegus to life. By that time, everything he had known was gone.

GETTING INVOLVED

In the first days after Antaegus's release, he was immensely confused. The world had moved on to an extent he had never even conceived, and he found himself utterly alone in it. In an attempt to stave off sheer madness, the giant set about understanding the city in which he found himself. Thanks in part to his ability to walk unseen, Antaegus soon learned the ultimate fate of his former civilization and the dragons' role in those events. He walked around the tents of Rushemé and saw firsthand what his once-proud race had become. Today, his primary goal is to retain his frayed sanity, but almost as important is his desire to uncover what became of the doomsday weapon he once helped construct. After thousands of years in proximity to it, Antaegus now has an intuitive understanding of the entity suffusing the city, but he fears the prolonged exposure to its taint has taken an as yet uncertain toll on his soul.

Shaken though he is, Antaegus remains one of the most powerful creatures in Stormreach, one whose moves and motives might shape the course of the city's future. Perhaps the easiest way to integrate him into a campaign is to introduce him as a rogue element for an unrelated conflict or situation. Antaegus's search for answers is likely to put him in the thick of the affairs of certain dragonmarked houses (Kundarak and Tharashk in particular) and his existence is bound to be noted by other giants eventually, despite his efforts. Gaulronak and the other Guardians of Rushemé (see page 111) are liable to view him as a spirit of the land, which will only complicate his affairs. (In return, Antaegus views them as devolved mockeries of his former race.)

It's important to note that Antaegus is not the pure-hearted champion he once was (or believed he was). If he truly loses his mind, the insane sorcerer could search out the doomsday device in an attempt to secure it for the war he expects to wage with the dragons that destroyed his civilization. Whatever he does, Antaegus is the city's quintessential random factor, a powerful and unstable individual with few existing ties.

ANTAEGUS

Male Cul'sir giant sorcerer 7

CN Huge giant

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +17, Spot +25

Languages Common, Draconic, Drow, Elven, Giant, Infernal

AC 34, touch 19, flat-footed 32

hp 284 (26 HD)

Immune electricity

SR 21

Fort +20, **Ref** +10, **Will** +18

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), swim 40 ft.

Melee greatsword +29/+24/+19/+14 (4d6+21/19–20) or

Melee 2 slams +29 each (1d6+14)

Ranged composite longbow +17/+12/+7/+2 (3d6+14/×3)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +39

Special Actions rock catching

Spell-Like Abilities (CL varies):

2/day (CL 15th)—*control weather*, *levitate*

1/day (CL 20th)—*empowered call lightning* (DC 16), *quickened chain lightning* (DC 19)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fly*

2nd (7/day)—*dimension leap*^{ME}, *knock*, *sense weakness*^{ME}

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *greater mage hand*^{SC}, *magic missile*

0 (6/day)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 39, Dex 14, Con 24, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 16

SQ freedom of movement, water breathing

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell-Like Ability, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability

Skills Bluff +14, Climb +20, Concentration +27, Craft (alchemy) +13, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +15, Jump +24, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +17, Perform (sing) +12, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +13, Spot +25, Swim +18

Possessions combat gear plus composite longbow (+14 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *bracers of armor* +8, *mantle of spell resistance*, *ring of protection* +4, *ring of sustenance*

Freedom of Movement (Su) Antaegus has a continuous freedom of movement ability, as the spell (caster level 20th). The effect can be dispelled, but he can create it again on its next turn as a free action.

Water Breathing (Ex) Antaegus can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use his spell-like abilities while submerged.

Skills Antaegus has a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line, and he ignores all weight penalties for gear carried when swimming.



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